

**THE IMPACT OF ECONOMIC LAND CONCESSIONS ON THE LOCAL  
LIVELIHOODS OF FOREST COMMUNITIES IN KRATIE  
PROVINCE, NORTHEASTERN CAMBODIA**

**TOUCH SIPHAT**

**MASTER OF ARTS  
IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**THE GRADUATE SCHOOL  
CHIANG MAI UNIVERSITY  
MARCH 2009**

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL IN  
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF ARTS  
IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**THE GRADUATE SCHOOL  
CHIANG MAI UNIVERSITY**

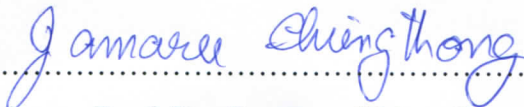
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**16 March 2009**

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis could not have been possible without assistance and facilitation from many memorable people. First and foremost, I would like to especially express my most sincere gratitude for utmost effort and support of my academic supervisor, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Jamaree Chiengthong, who has imparted her knowledge and experiences and contributed to this study through her constant constructive and invaluable comments. Without her keen instructions and guidance throughout my study, it would have been impossible for me to write this thesis. My deepest thanks and profound appreciation go to Prof. Dr. Yos Santasombat, a committee member, for his patience, encouragement, support, extensive input and alternative insight for the improvement of my thesis. My deepest thanks are also extended to Dr. Andreas Neef, an external committee member, for his invaluable comments and suggestions regarding my research findings. I would also like to thank Aj. Ekamol Saichan for his encouragement and good comments, during I was developing this research proposal.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Thailand International Development Cooperation Agency (TICA) for awarding me with a full scholarship to study for my Master Degree in Sustainable Development at the Regional Center of Social Science and Sustainable Development, Faculty of Social Science, Chiang Mai University. With this full scholarship, I have had a great opportunity to learn from many professors and lecturers from RCSD and the Social Sciences Faculty. I would therefore like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Prof. Dr. Anan Ganjanapan, Prof. Dr. Chayan Vaddhanaphuti, Asst. Prof. Dr. Chusak Wittayapak, Dr. Pinkaew Laungaramsri, Dr. Santita Ganjanapan, and Lect. Preuk Gypmantasiri for their efforts and patience in instruction, recommendation and encouragement to enable me to accomplish my study through different hardships. Many thanks go to the RCSD staff for their kind assistance while I studied at Chiang Mai University.

I would like to extend my greatest thanks and deep appreciation to Mr. Seng Narong, Director and Mr. Leap Samnang, Deputy Director of Department of Training and Research, MRD for their kind assistance, moral support and encouragement in

both my work and study. I would also like to thank to all of my colleagues at DTR/MRD for their assistance and for sharing experiences.

I owe a further dept of thanks to Mr. Nhem Sovanna, Senior NREM adviser, Chhneang Kirivuth, Adviser to NREM project in Kratie Province, and Mr. Seng Sovathana, a former RCSD student, for their kind assistance, recommendation and encouragement in this study. A special note of thanks is also extended to Mr. Yus Pheary, director of CED and his staff for their cooperation and discussions on issues related to my research, and for sharing his experiences. I am deeply grateful to the commune councilors of Kbal Damrey commune and the villagers of O Tanoeng village whose lives and experiences have become the integral part of my thesis. My special thanks go to Ms. Hun Poeun's family, village host, for extending hospitality.

I would like to extend my special thanks to Mr. Paiboon who kindly helped to translate my abstract into Thai Language, Mr. Puttipong who kindly helped to edit maps used in my thesis. Many thanks go to Mr. Daniel Powell for his assistance in English editing of this thesis. Special thanks also go to my friendly classmates Dyna, Fred, Mei, Phillip, David, Malar, Tun, Phone, and Phuc for sharing knowledge and experiences. My deepest thanks go to Ms. Atchara, Ms. Natedao and some other RCSD students for their friendly and kind assistance while I was living and studying in Chiang Mai. Many thanks also go to my Cambodian friends Layhout, Layheng, Kano, Chantha, Peou, Virak, Prem, Sokhom, Monida, Sokha, and Sophea for sharing friendship and a social environment during my stay in Chiang Mai.

“If you don't want to work under the hot sun like this, you have to go to school and study hard for your future”. I will never forget this statement made by a farmer, my **father** while we were working on the farm together since I was a teen. Most acknowledgment and profound thanks therefore go to my beloved father, Mr. Touch Moa for his advice and the greatest care for me. I owe a debt of thanks to my sisters and brother who assisted me in many ways to enable me to succeed at this level of study. My greatest debt is to my adorable and faithful wife, Mith Somountha and my lovely son, Touch Vathanak Vitou who have granted me with moral support, encouragement and great care of my life. Finally, I dedicate this thesis to my mother Chhun Gheik Heang (1938-1984).

Touch Siphat

<b>Thesis Title</b>	The Impact of Economic Land Concessions on the Local Livelihoods of Forest Communities In Kratie Province, Northeastern Cambodia	
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<b>Degree</b>	Master of Arts (Sustainable Development)	
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### ABSTRACT

This study attempts to understand the impact of economic land concessions for agro-industrial production promoted by the government. This promotion heavily impacts on the locals' livelihoods and obstructs decentralized natural resource management, especially in natural forest resources. They also examined locals' response to such a development scheme. The study found that in regard to "economic growth", the state has very strong control over natural resources and people. Further, as a post-war nation, the state commits to developing its economy by gathering involvement from different stakeholders, including international donors, development agencies, NGOs, and local people in the development process. Yet privatization of natural resources such as land, forestry, fishery, mining and so forth can be also found in the Kingdom in favor of a globalizing economy.

After the first general election in 1993, the Cambodian government has been committed to reducing poverty by taking multiple approaches. In terms of economic liberalization, Cambodia has been integrated into the regional and global economies. This approach offers a good opportunity to international trade, resulting in an increased demand for resource utilities such as forest, land, water, fishery and mining. With high demand of these resources and lack of effective regulations and managerial mechanisms, the multiple users take an opportunity to exploit at a massive level. Yet land and forest resources, which are essentially important to the locals' livelihoods,

have been privatized for the purpose of large-scale agricultural development, known as economic land concessions for commercial tree plantations. The privatization of forestland too often does not have any local consultation on the negative impacts on local communities and natural environments, leading to spark conflicts between private companies and local people.

This study took place in O Tanoeng village, Kratie province, Northeastern Cambodia. To understand the context, documentary research was done, and various research methods were applied to gather primary data such as key informant interview, focus group, participant observation and household survey. The data were categorized and interpreted in the frame of the concepts of state power in natural resource management as enforcement, local community participation in resource management, and local's response as a livelihood strategy. The critical analysis was based on the interpretation of livelihood activities and the perspectives of the locals, and the local complexity.

Paddy rice fields, forest products and grasslands are the most important sources for the O Tanoeng villagers' livelihoods. The villagers attempted to set up a community forestry system in order to respond to declining natural resources in the community and to sustain their livelihoods. The idea of natural forest protection was initiated by the locals in the CDP and recognized by the local and provincial authorities. However, it was ignored by the central government. Yet the government granted the forestland sought as a community forest to the private company.

As farmland is most important for their life, it became the center of motivation to protest against the company. Although the farmlands were prevented from encroachment, the locals are not satisfied as they are concerned about the lack of land for their next generation and no space for raising cattle, and losing their natural resource-based livelihoods. Thus, they keep resisting through "silent actions" such as refusing to work for the company, secretly entering the concession area to hunt or collect forest products, and wishing that bad things happen to the company. In this sense, the locals not only reject participation in such a development scheme, but they also see this scheme as the biggest obstacle to their future lives. Besides seeing this scheme in a passive way, the locals consider that the government left them behind, and they are very much concerned with their future lives.

<b>ชื่อเรื่องวิทยานิพนธ์</b>	ผลกระทบของการสัมปทานที่ดินเศรษฐกิจต่อวิถีการดำรงชีวิต ท้องถิ่นของชุมชนในเขตป่า ในจังหวัดกรอเจะ ภาคตะวันออกเฉียงเหนือ กัมพูชา	
<b>ผู้เขียน</b>	นายทัช ศรีพัทธ์	
<b>ปริญญา</b>	ศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต (การพัฒนาอย่างยั่งยืน)	
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	ศาสตราจารย์ ดร.ยศ สันตสมบัติ	กรรมการ

### บทคัดย่อ

การศึกษานี้พยายามทำความเข้าใจถึงผลกระทบของการสัมปทานที่ดินเศรษฐกิจที่รัฐบาลให้การสนับสนุนเพื่อการผลิตอุตสาหกรรมเกษตร การสนับสนุนนี้ได้ส่งผลกระทบอย่างมากต่อวิถีการดำรงชีวิตของท้องถิ่นและยังขัดขวางกระบวนการจัดการทรัพยากรธรรมชาติแบบไม่รวมศูนย์ (กระจายอำนาจ) โดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งทรัพยากรป่าไม้ รวมทั้งยังอธิบายแนวทางของการสนองตอบของท้องถิ่นต่อแผนการพัฒนาเหล่านี้อีกด้วย การศึกษาพบว่า ด้วยการมุ่งถึงการเติบโตทางเศรษฐกิจ รัฐจึงเข้มงวดอย่างมากเพื่อควบคุมทรัพยากรและประชาชน ต่อมา ในฐานะชาติหลังสงคราม รัฐผูกมัดต่อการพัฒนาทางเศรษฐกิจโดยการเข้ามาเกี่ยวข้องของผู้มีส่วนได้ส่วนเสียอย่างแตกต่างหลากหลาย รวมทั้งแหล่งทุนนานาชาติ ตัวแทนด้านการพัฒนา องค์กรพัฒนาเอกชน คนท้องถิ่นในกระบวนการพัฒนา ดังนั้นกระบวนการแปลงทรัพยากรธรรมชาติให้เป็นทรัพย์สินของเอกชน ทั้งที่ดิน ป่าไม้ การประมง เหมืองแร่ และอื่นๆ สามารถพบเห็นได้ในราชอาณาจักรด้วยแรงปรารถนาของเศรษฐกิจโลก

หลังจากการเลือกตั้งทั่วไปในปี พ.ศ. 2536 รัฐบาลกัมพูชาให้คำมั่นที่จะมุ่งลดปัญหาความยากจนของประชาชนลงด้วยวิธีการที่ซับซ้อน ในทอมนของกระบวนการเศรษฐกิจเสรีนิยม กัมพูชาถูกผนวกเข้าสู่ระบบเศรษฐกิจโลกและภูมิภาค แนวทางนี้ได้เสนอโอกาสที่ดีต่อการค้าระหว่างประเทศในการเพิ่มอุปสงค์เพื่อใช้ประโยชน์จากทรัพยากร เช่น ป่าไม้ น้ำ ประมง และเหมืองแร่ สืบเนื่องด้วยความต้องการทรัพยากรอย่างสูง แต่ขาดกฎระเบียบที่มีประสิทธิภาพและกลไกด้านการจัดการ ทำให้ผู้ใช้ประโยชน์หลากหลายหน้าจกฉวยโอกาสขูดรีดทรัพยากรอย่างขนานใหญ่ ดังนั้นทรัพยากรที่ดินและป่าไม้ซึ่งสำคัญอย่างยิ่งต่อวิถีการดำรงชีวิตท้องถิ่นกลับถูกแปลงให้เป็นทรัพย์สิน



ของเอกชนโดยมุ่งหวังการพัฒนาการเกษตรขนาดใหญ่ซึ่งเป็นที่รับรู้กัน คือ การสัมปทานที่ดิน เศรษฐกิจเพื่อการปลูกต้นไม้แปลงขนาดใหญ่กระบวนการแปลงที่ดินป่าไม้ให้เป็นทรัพย์สินของ เอกชนบ่อยครั้งมักที่ไม่ได้ปรึกษาท้องถิ่นถึงผลกระทบด้านลบต่อชุมชนท้องถิ่นและสภาพแวดล้อม ทางธรรมชาติ อันเป็นเชื้อไฟนำไปสู่ความขัดแย้งระหว่างกลุ่มบริษัทเอกชนและชุมชนท้องถิ่น

งานศึกษานี้ดำเนินการศึกษา ณ หมู่บ้านโตนัง จังหวัดสระบุรี ในเขตภาคเหนือของ กัมพูชา เพื่อให้เข้าใจบริบท ดังนั้นงานศึกษานี้จึงใช้วิธีวิจัยหลายแบบเพื่อเก็บข้อมูลขั้นต้น อันได้แก่ การวิจัยเอกสาร การสัมภาษณ์ผู้ให้ข้อมูล การอภิปรายกลุ่ม การสังเกตการณ์แบบมีส่วนร่วม และการสำรวจครัวเรือน ข้อมูลได้รับการจัดจำแนกหมวดหมู่และให้ความหมายในกรอบของมโนทัศน์ ของอำนาจรัฐในการจัดการทรัพยากรธรรมชาติในฐานะของการบังคับควบคุม การมีส่วนร่วมของ ชุมชนท้องถิ่นในการจัดการทรัพยากร และการสนองตอบของท้องถิ่นในฐานะยุทธศาสตร์วิถีการ ดำรงชีวิต อีกทั้งการวิเคราะห์เชิงวิพากษ์ยังเป็นพื้นฐานของการตีความกิจกรรมเกี่ยวกับวิถีชีวิตและ มุมมองของท้องถิ่น และความซับซ้อนของท้องถิ่น

นาข้าว ผลผลจากป่า และทุ่งหญ้าเป็นแหล่งทรัพยากรสำคัญต่อวิถีการดำรงชีวิตของ ชาวบ้านโตนัง ชาวบ้านต่างพยายามจัดตั้งป่าชุมชนเพื่อที่จะสนองตอบต่อการลดน้อยถอยลงของ ทรัพยากรทางธรรมชาติในชุมชนและเพื่อยังคงวิถีการดำรงชีวิตของพวกเขาเอาไว้ต่อไป ท้องถิ่นได้ ริเริ่มความคิดเรื่องการปกป้องป่าไม้ขึ้น โดยการบรรจุเข้าไปในแผนพัฒนาชุมชน และองค์การ บริหารระดับจังหวัดเองก็ตระหนักและรับรู้ถึงความคิดนี้ แต่อย่างไรก็ตามรัฐบาลส่วนกลางกลับไม่ ตระหนักรับรู้หรือสนใจในความคิดเรื่องการปกป้องป่าที่ชุมชนริเริ่มขึ้น เมื่อเป็นเช่นนั้นรัฐบาลจึง มอบแหล่งที่ดินป่าไม้ในฐานะป่าชุมชนของท้องถิ่นนี้ให้แก่บริษัทเงินแทน

ในเมื่อที่ทำกินคือความสำคัญสำหรับชีวิตของชาวบ้าน มันจึงกลายเป็นจุดศูนย์รวมของเหตุ จูงใจต่อการประท้วงต่อต้านบริษัท แม้ว่าที่ทำกินจะได้รับการกันออกแล้วก็ตาม ชาวบ้านก็ยังไม่ พอใจ เพราะเนื่องจากขาดแคลนที่ดินสำหรับคนรุ่นต่อไปและไม่มีที่ว่างพอสำหรับเลี้ยงวัว รวมทั้ง สูญเสียฐานทรัพยากรทางธรรมชาติของวิถีชีวิตไปด้วย ดังนั้นชาวบ้านจึงยังต่อต้านอย่างต่อเนื่อง ผ่าน “ปฏิบัติการแบบเงียบ” เช่น ปฏิเสธงานของบริษัท แอบเข้าไปในพื้นที่สัมปทานเพื่อล่าสัตว์ และเก็บหาผลผลิตจากป่า ประารถนาให้เหตุการณ์ร้ายๆ อุบัติขึ้นแก่บริษัท ในแง่นี้ท้องถิ่นเองไม่เพียง ปฏิเสธการเข้าไปมีส่วนร่วมในโครงการพัฒนาเท่านั้น แต่ชาวบ้านยังมองว่าโครงการนี้เป็นสิ่งกีด ขวางที่ใหญ่ที่สุดต่อการดำเนินชีวิตในอนาคตของพวกเขา ยิ่งไปกว่านั้นในเมื่อโครงการถูกมองไป ในด้านลบต่อวิถีการดำรงชีวิต ท้องถิ่นจึงมองว่ารัฐบาลได้ละเลยทอดทิ้งพวกเขาไว้ข้างหลัง ทว่า ชาวบ้านก็ตระหนักถึงชีวิตในอนาคตของพวกเขาอย่างมาก

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## ABBREVIATION

AHRC	Asian Human Rights Commission
CBFM	Community-Based Forest Management
CC	Communes Councils
CCD	Cambodian Community Development
CDC	Commune Development Committees
CDP	Commune Development Plan
CED	Community Economic Development
CIP	Commune Investment Program
DDC	District Development Committees
MAFF	Ministry Of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery
MLMUPC	Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning, and Construction
MRD	Ministry of Rural Development
NCS	National Committee for Support to the Communes
NREM	Natural Resource and Environment Management
NSDP	National Strategic Development Plan
PBC	Planning and Budgeting Committee
PRDC	Provincial Rural Development Committees
RGC	Royal Government of Cambodia
SEDP I	First Five-Year Socio-Economic Development Plan
SEDP II	Second Five-Year Socio-Economic Development Plan
STF	Seila Task Force
UN-HCHR	United Nation-High Commissioner of Human Rights
UNTAC	United Nation Transitional Authority in Cambodia
VDC	Village Development Committee
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development



## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background**

With a population of around 14 million and an area of 181,035 square kilometers, Cambodia is the smallest of the Indochinese countries. Cambodia is also one of the world's poorest countries, reflecting its recent emergence from armed conflict over three decades. Eighty five percent of the population lives in rural areas, existing at a subsistence level and the poorest sector of Cambodian society, the emphasis is on the aftermath of warfare. Following the Paris Peace Accord in 1991, the national general election in 1993 was carried out under responsibility of the United Nation Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC); the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) was then established. The 1993 election event has been considered as an impetus to reinstall the second Kingdom of Cambodia while the first Kingdom of Cambodia was ruined in the first quarter of 1970.

As a consequence, The RGC's primary objective has been set up to improve the wellbeing of people throughout the country, particularly those in rural areas, who represent the overwhelming majority. Rural development programs have also been initiated by bilateral, multilateral and non-governmental organizations and have proliferated in Cambodia. Hence, The first Five-Year Socio-Economic Development Plan, 1996-2000 (SEDP I), the Second Five-Year Socio-Economic Development Plan, 2001-2005 (SEDP II) and other development strategic papers were set up to provide a general framework for a decentralized and participatory approach to rural development. A key component of this approach is the development of local institutions at provincial and local levels to formulate and implement coherent local development programs and activities.

In 1995, with assistance from the United Nations Development Program/Cambodian Rehabilitation and Regeneration Project (UNDP/CARERE), the government initiated the Highland Development Plan in Ratanakiri. International donor agencies have advocated and heavily financed this vision. However, it has not always been effectively undertaken (Suzuki, 2005). This marked a shift in the process

of development with a focus on decentralization to strengthen local governance systems. Accordingly, the Seila Program (*Seila* means Stone Foundation in Cambodian) addressed rural development by improving the capacity for local governance and organizing rural community structures. This program aims to prepare grassroots people for the devolution of power and increasing participation in development processes, such as decision-making regarding the community development investment plans for rural infrastructure, economy, society and natural resources. The Seila Program created a Village Development Committee (VDC), which consisted of elected members from the local community and replaced traditional political and rural structures. The VDC serves as the bottom rung in the hierarchy of government development committees for communes, districts and provinces (Sovathana, 2004).

By 2002, Cambodia adopted the development model of a bottom-up approach which was considered as a big change of development approach in its history. Through a nation-wide communal election, which was the main impetus of decentralizing power at the local level, Communes Councils (CCs) became the significant service providers in the eyes of their local constituencies—local community and implementers of community development projects in the partnership with donors and civil society organizations. There are 11,261 councilors that represent 1,621 Communes in the whole country. The basic regulatory framework is now in place; however, institutional and administrative systems and procedures in implementing the development in rural communities has not only refined slowly but is seeing some emerging conflicts, in particular conflicts on natural resource use in rural communities. Many of those conflicts have occurred due to the government retaining its top-down approach in the reality of development practices.

Despite the RGC's establishment in 1993 and commitment to reduce poverty through a bottom-up approach, Cambodia still exhibits a high degree of uncertainty in the political, economic and social security spheres. In terms of economic liberalization, Cambodia has been integrated into the regional and global economies. This opening up of international trade and rapid economic growth has resulted in an increasing demand for resource utilization such as forest, land, water, fisheries and mining. With high demand of these resources and lack of effective regulations and

managerial mechanisms, the multiple users (including military, local businessmen, farmers, seasonal migrants, and foreign investors) take opportunities to exploit at a massive level.

Additionally, land and forest which are the center for the livelihood of the forest communities are now hot spaces of conflicts, because the government grants these resources to private companies for the purpose of large-scale agricultural development that has been known as economic land concession. In the favor of national economic growth, the economic land concessions have been granted to private companies without any discussions regarding the negative impact on local communities and natural environment. Since economic land concession becomes a main focus of the government in economic development, it is also actively debated by non-governmental actors. The government strongly believes that it is a good way to intensify agricultural production and to diversify job opportunities for the local people. In practice, however, many private companies have taken over agricultural land of the local people and destroyed natural forests that are sources of their livelihoods. In addition, the grants have been seen to run in contrast with decentralized natural resource management. The local people are wondering how their forest resource dependence and paddy-field rice lives will continue since large companies' land concessions have use rights for up to 70 years.

## **1.2 Research Problem and Justification**

Natural resources, on the ground and in social theory, are now highly contested spaces; those living in the arenas of struggle and conflict (land where forest, water, and land resources are contested) have found themselves on the losing side. Under the development label, most undeveloped countries tried to actualize their highest stage of economic potential. In this sense, they have duplicated and implemented all development outlines made by the industrialized world in order to improve the economies through accumulating profit from all sectors, including from natural resources such as forest and land.

The expansion of the state's power controls over and exploitation of natural resources to fulfill the demands of the economic growth and global market can be seen in different forms such as national parks, conservations and protected areas,

economic land concessions and so forth. Rapid increase in exploitation in the form of profit-oriented industrial development is dynamically excluding and cornering the existing community rights. They are creating a lot of conflict and competition over natural resources between the actors involved in the degradation of natural resources and the environment.

In general, land has been considered as an important resource in rural development and rural subsistence economies. In South East Asia, particularly in Cambodia, there are historically direct use rights based on the needs of rural subsistence economies, such as the rights to clear and cultivate land, the rights to pasture animals, to extract timber and collect other forest products, the rights to obtain water, to hunt, and to fish and also the rights to material and land for building a home. Different levels of access rights to land are a complex web of institutions, relationships, and human behaviors that determine inter-personal relationships and the natural environment through ownership and utilization.

By the 1960s, it was estimated that 73 % of Cambodia's territory was covered with forests and rural communities could clear forests as needed to bring more land under cultivation without significant ecological impacts. Land was not traded, there were no formalized land markets and those who actually used the land also defined ownership and control. The most common pattern of establishing ownership was by clearing forests and using the cleared land for agriculture. Traditionally, land ownership in Cambodia has been tied to land use. Although land theoretically belonged to the country's ruling sovereign power, the value of land lay in its use and cultivation was accepted as a form of ownership (Guttal, 2006).

However, a terrible civil war left the country almost devastated and millions of people were killed during the 1970s, and many people left their land. Under extreme communist Maoist Ideology; Pol Pot, a leader of "Democratic Kampuchea" (DK) brought Cambodia to "Year Zero". All the community's formal and traditional structures were destroyed during this period of time (Nee, 2000). The Cambodian government at that time has been characterized as the "Pol Pot Regime or Khmer Rouge Regime or Genocide Regime or the time of the Killing Field". In that darkest regime, land tenure and cadastral records were destroyed and private property was abolished, and all land belonged to the state organization (Vitou et la, 2006).

By 1979 the Pol Pot genocide regime was replaced by “the People’s Republic of Kampuchea” (PRK) which was backed by the neighboring country of Vietnam. Later, the PRK became the “State of Cambodia” (SOC). The government of the State of Cambodia (SOC) started to allocate agricultural land to rural communities and established ownership rights for residential land and possession rights for cultivated land. By the early 1990s, Cambodia had been catapulted into a free market economy, private property regimes started to define land use and ownership, and an unregulated land market started to burgeon. Guttal, 2006 described that in the 1990’s, some of the most fertile and plum agricultural and forest lands were immediately claimed by wealthy businessmen and their political allies in Phnom Penh. The investment of private companies in areas such as tourism, manufacturing and agro-processing, and unregulated forest and land concessions was also in place. This limited the agricultural land available to rural communities and rights of access to natural resources of them.

Cambodia is now employing the perception of land as a commodity and commercial agriculture in the name of economic development, which is creating a lot of land disputes everywhere in the country. Visitors to Cambodia cannot avoid seeing numerous large plots of land surrounded by fence all of which belong to powerful and/or elite individuals. Such land can be sold and/or rented to somebody else as a commodity. Land accumulation is not surprising: looking at forest and forestlands that have been claimed as state property, it is evident that thousands of hectares of forestland or forest areas have been allocated to private companies in the name of economic land concessions with the purpose of commercial exploitation.

Presently, land concessions are booming in Cambodia resulting from the economic development policy reform, which has opened up new economic-oriented, market-based economies. According to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery (MAFF) of the Royal Government of Cambodia, by 2007, 66 economic land concessions will remain covering an area of 1,006,777 hectares in 15 provinces (MAFF, 2007). There are also many economic land concessions, which were granted at the provincial level, existing in different provinces of the Kingdom. According to the 2005 Sub-Decree on ELC, the economic land concessions, which are granted at the provincial level, do not exceed 1,000 hectares.

Within the economic reforms, state development plans started to promote agro-industry to entice the national and international investors to invest in agricultural plantations. Evidently, the open-door policy has helped to attract investment of \$12 billion from 1994 to 2006. Among those, South Korea is the biggest investor at \$2.36 billion, followed by Malaysia at \$1.98 billion and China at \$1.58 billion. Thai companies have invested only \$431 million during that period (Bangkok Post, 2007). Kong Vibol<sup>1</sup> said the country was looking to attract companies in agricultural and agro-industries, transport, telecommunications, infrastructure, energy and electrical goods, tourism, mining, labor-intensive and export-oriented processing and manufacturing sectors.

In doing so, state sets up institutional arrangements to allow investors to feel more confident in investment. According to article 15 of the Land Law, set in place on 30 August 2001, and the Sub-Decree on State Land Management, the state's land is land with a public interest use, and includes property having a natural origin, such as forests. State private land is all land that is neither state public land nor legally privately or collectively owned under the land law. The Sub-Decree sets out the framework for state land identification, mapping, registration and classification, and notes where additional administrative guidelines are required. Within these laws, investors would not hesitate to invest their capital on land in order to profit in their business.

In the same law, if any person who peacefully uses uncontested possession of land (but not state public land) for at least five years prior to the law's promulgation, he/she has the right to request a definitive title of ownership. However, according to a 2004 UN Human Rights report, the majority of rural Cambodians do not have title documents recognizing their ownership of land, either because they have not felt the need to obtain titles, or cannot afford to do so. Additionally, the Department of Cadastre and Geography shows that only about 14 percent of an estimated 4.5 million applicants have received formal land certificates since the early 1990s. Also in this period, the Royal Cambodian Government introduced a number of private investment incentives through an economic reform agenda to promote economic and social

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<sup>1</sup> Kong Vibol, first secretary of state for the government of Cambodia, said at a briefing in Bangkok, **Cambodia's Open Door Investment Policies**, Bangkok Post, June 2, 2007.

development. Agricultural development was claimed as a priority with the aim of ensuring food security, providing raw materials for industry, increasing exports and creating employment. The RCG also started to grant economic concessions on forest and state lands to private companies. These concessions were outside existing laws and served to dispossess rural communities from farm and forest lands (Guttal, 2006).

The 2001 land law authorizes the granting of land concessions that respond to both social and economic intents. Land concessions must be encoded in a specific legal document, issued by a competent authority prior to the occupation of the land, and must be registered with the Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction. The law mentions that economic land concessions can only be granted over state private land, for a maximum duration of 99 years. These concessions cannot establish ownership rights over land. However, apart from the right to alienate land, concessionaires are vested with all other rights associated with ownership during the term of the contract. The Sub-Decree on Economic Land Concessions, which was put in place in December 2005, provides further institutional arrangement for managing economic land concessions (NU High Commissioner for Human Rights in Cambodia (UN-HCHR), 2007).

According to UN-HCHR, 2007; the systematic mapping, classification and registration of state public and private lands have not yet taken place and the majority of rural people do not have legal documentation to verify their ownership of land. However, economic land concessions continue to be granted prior to a determination of whether the land is in fact private land of the state, and not privately or collectively owned or possessed in accordance with the land law. The ongoing grant of economic land concessions prior to the mapping and registration of state private land, and without due respect for the requirements of public consultation, and environmental and social impact assessments, poses a serious threat of further alienation of indigenous traditional land. Moreover, the central government's promotion of economic land concessions is challenging to the decentralization policy which is the channel for local participation in the development process which is employed by the government itself.

Consequently, economic land concessions have been detrimental to the livelihoods, traditions and survival of rural Cambodian communities, both indigenous

and non-indigenous. For indigenous communities, their cultural and spiritual connections to traditional lands add a further dimension to the impact of economic land concessions. The most commonly voiced concern of both indigenous and non-indigenous communities is the encroachment of economic land concessions upon land and forested areas that are the basis of their livelihoods and survival. These concessions have led to destruction of their agricultural and grazing land, and loss of access to non-timber forest products.

Specifically, in Kratie province, seven economic land concessions have been centrally granted covering 64,373 hectares, according to the 2007 MAFF's report. This statistic is different from what Mr. Kuy Hout, Director of the Kratie Provincial Department of Agriculture, told the local newspaper, *Rasmei Kampuchea* on 10 February 2008 - that there were 10 land concession companies, covering 70,000 hectares (*Rasmei Kampuchea*, Vol. 16, #4512, 10/2/2008). However, as of the last data update by MAFF in November 2008, there were 20 economic land concessions, which are individually less than 1,000 hectares of land, granted by the provincial authority.

Among others, the Global Agricultural Development, Asia World Agricultural Development and Green Island Agricultural Development companies have been granted over 29,383 hectares for teak plantations in Kbal Dam Rey Commune, Sambo district, Kratie province in March 2006. After the Ministry of Agriculture signed a 70 year lease contract, the companies began to clear land and forested areas, create roads and plant teak trees. For instance, to develop teak plantation the Chinese investment company Global Agricultural Development Cambodia Co. Ltd began bulldozing 9800 hectares of land and started to divide the area into plots set out for the new plantations and the company's offices. Those activities have destroyed rice fields and farm land belonging to villagers in Kbal Dam Rey commune, including Phnong, Mil and Kuy indigenous communities, and cleared its dense forest.

According to AHRC<sup>2</sup>, (2007); the land that was granted by the state is from Kbal Dam Rey commune. The total amount of agricultural land that was taken over in Kbal Dam Rey commune is 1448 hectares. However, the government contends that they only reclaimed 69 hectares of cultivated land from the commune. The

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<sup>2</sup> The Asian Human Rights Commission



company has provided no compensation to the villagers and the government continues to show little interest in resolving the dispute. Also, the government had not initiated any consultation with the local people as to whether the land concession will affect their agriculture. The villagers are concerned about their sources of livelihood and wonder how their communities will survive in the future. Those granted lands also have an affect on community initiatives of establishing community forests. Actually, the community-based NGO-Community Economic Development (CED) has been working since 2005 with local communities to establish a community forest in the commune. Local authorities and forestry officials were aware of this initiative. Moreover, this commune is a target of natural resource and environmental management projects which have been run by the Seila program since 2003. However, by 2006, the economic land concessions were granted over the land sought as a community forest.

The people in Kbal Dam Rey Commune have had negative reactions to the project because they have not been consulted regarding such land concessions. These companies have encroached on their farmland, grassland for the local cattle, and forestland that the local people used to rely on for their subsistence. Furthermore, the local people have been prohibited to gather non timber products and not allowed to travel via the ox-cart road where they previously were free to traverse. Today, those villagers are excluded from accessibility to the resource tenure that they once had been accustomed to (Commissioner for Human right's report, 2007). Therefore, this study attempts to look closer at issues of the local community's livelihood and their participation in the community development and seeks out a better understanding of implementation of decentralization policy of the Cambodian government by contextualizing this study in Kbal Dam Rey commune using deep interviews with O Tanoeung villagers, one of the five villages of the Commune.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

Since my research interest is on the issues of economic land concession and decentralization in natural resources management in forest community I intended to understand the local livelihood situation within such a context and their response to such a development project. In the context of such development practice, I focused on

how villagers express their ideas through their traditional practices in order to respond to development practice. To define my research problem, I have three research questions as follows:

1. What are traditional practices of the locals in natural resource utilization?
2. How do the local people use traditional practices to assert claim on natural resources?
3. What are the locals' responses to the economic land concessions for maintaining their livelihood?

#### **1.4 Research Objectives**

The main purpose of this study aims at highlighting the impact of economic land concession projects on the locals' livelihoods and the effects on decentralized natural resources and environmental management, especially natural forest resources. Such information is essential to reach a better understanding of the villager's level of dependence on land and the forest resources, their needs and concerns, and their adaptive livelihood strategy. This study therefore has four major objectives, which are briefly summarized as follow:

- To examine the local's interaction in natural resource control and utilization through the traditional way of life.
- To review the economic land concession process and its impacts on the local people and decentralized forest management in the community.
- To understand the local people's needs and concerns on natural resources
- To explore the adaptive livelihood strategies of the local people through ways of response to the economic land concession project.

#### **1.5 Conceptual Framework**

Forest and land resources are the most important sources for developing countries beginning to develop their economy, especially in Cambodia. In order to be able to utilize those resources, the government has to claim those resources as state property and create managerial mechanisms and a set of laws and regulations demarcating boundaries to maintain easy control over resources. Those laws and regulations are suited best for large-scale exploitation investments. With the

successful law enforcement of resource control from the government, the local people, and in particular the forest communities, too often have been evicted or victimized.

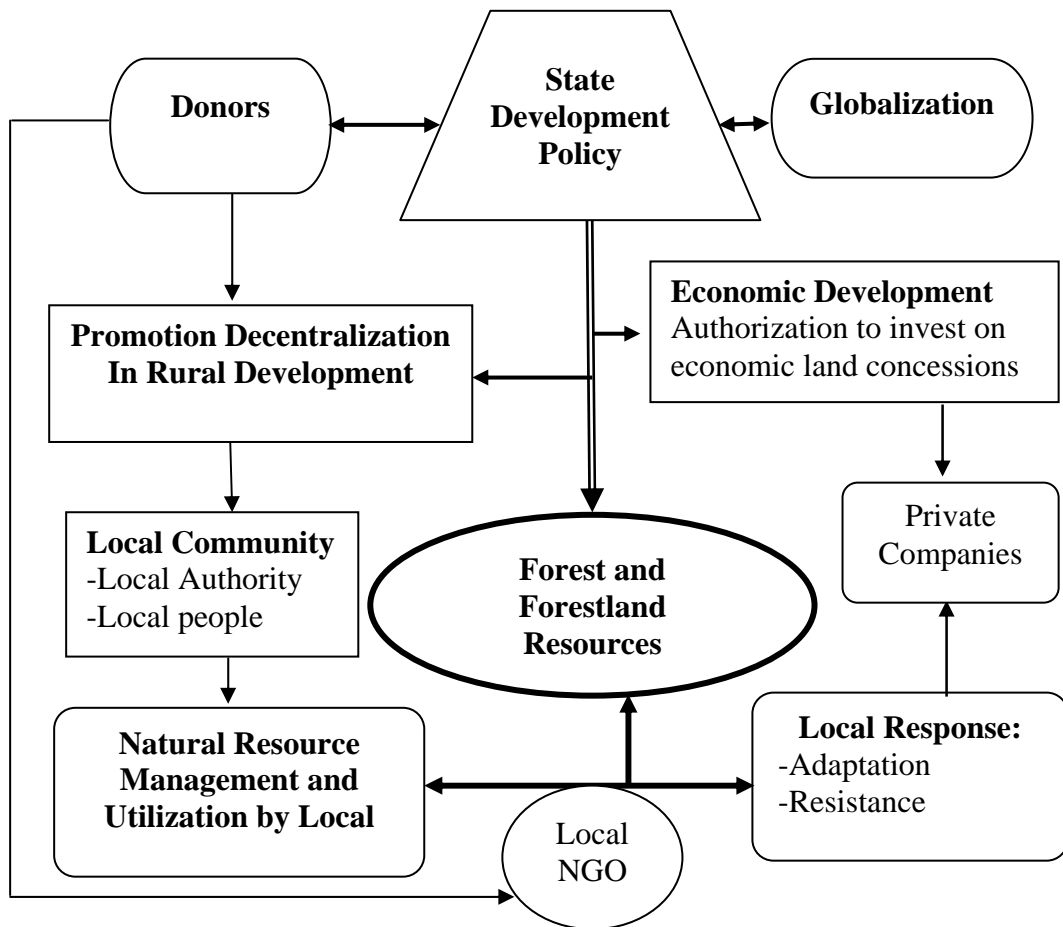
In the present time, many nation states use the “win-win” strategy in economic development and natural resource and environmental management. On the one hand, the government introduces land reforms, conservation programs and reforestation programs in order to respond to global environmental degradation. Such programs have usually been implemented centrally; and those have been criticized that they are masks for resource exploitation at a large-scale level. This can be found in many countries throughout the world such as Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia and so forth. On the other hand, governments implement decentralization policy which is a channel for participation of local and other relevant stakeholders.

Because many international donors believe that development can be achieved through “Participation of local people”, many governments have accepted this approach in order to pump millions of US dollars from international donors to run development projects at the community level. A clear example in Cambodia, since the late 1990s, is the government reforming its development policy by taking decentralization as the most essential thing to ensure local participation in the development process. In doing so, the Cambodian government receives development funds from multiple donors totaling about \$600 million USD a year.

But, what happens on the ground? Looking closer at government land reform programs in some countries such as Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia and Cambodia, the introduction of such programs are to try to claim ownership over natural resources in order to ease control and utilization. Through such programs local people may get rights of ownership over a few hectares of farm land and land for homes while holding land title, while the rest of land and other natural resources will belong to the government (state property). Thus, the government is able to utilize those resources for any purpose without being afraid of any resistance from the local people. Whenever conflicts on those resources such as land or forestland occur between local people and the government’s agents or private companies, the local people will often be losers because the solution will be based on the land certificate.

Governments generally use “state property” for economic purposes successfully through privatization. For example, land and forestland have been claimed as state property, and millions of hectares of that land were centrally privatized under the mane of forestry concessions or economic land concessions with the best reasons being economic growth, job opportunities for the local people, poverty reduction and so forth. However, such development process put pressure on livelihood of natural resource-independent people resulting in a lot of conflicts between local people and state agents and companies. Consequently, we may note that the local people are victims; they often face difficulty in their livelihood. As a result, they may come up with different strategies to maintain their livelihood, but in some cases they may group together to resist serious oppression from those who are powerful, with different forms of resistance or protest.

In this research, three main concepts have been used: (1) state power in natural resource management as enforcement, (2) local community participation in resource management, and (3) local response to monoculture as a livelihood strategy; to increase understanding of the issues after economic land concessions for teak plantations have been placed in the community in order to find out what natural resource management is in practice, how the local people respond to the concessionaires in order to maintain their livelihoods, and to understand how the decentralization policy has been working in this community.



**Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework**

## **1.6 Methodological Application in Field Research**

### **1.6.1 Research Site Selection**

Since I was told that people in Kbal Dam Rey Commune have been suffering from economic land concessions, I intended to look closer at what happened and how the local people cope with the problems. In here, I would like to narrate why I selected O Tanoeng Village as a research site. At first, I decided to choose Poy Commune of Ratanakiri Province as my research site to study about indigenous people and forestland issues. However, I changed my mind after I attended a three-day workshop about “Land Management Sub-Component” which is in the Natural Resource Management and Livelihoods Program (2006-2010), run by the Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning, and Construction (MLMUPC) on 19-20 April 2007, supported by DANIDA/ DFID in Pursat Province.

At that time, I met some participants who were from Kratie province, and I was told about the land and forestland issues in Sambo district, Kratie Province. They described that the people in those three communes of Sambo district have been suffering from economic land concessions which had been granted in early 2006 by the Ministry of Agriculture to three companies for teak tree plantation and a processing factory. Amongst other communes, Kbal Dam Rey Commune struck my interest due to its location in the area now held by three separate companies. Those three companies—Green Island Agricultural Development (Cambodia) Co., Ltd; Global Agricultural Development (Cambodia) Co., Ltd, and; Asia World Agricultural Development (Cambodia) Co., Ltd—have been granted a total amount of approximately 30,000 hectares of forestland as of the 15th March 2006 agreement (MAFF, 2007).

After the Ministry of Agriculture signed a 70-year lease contract, the companies began to clear land and forests, create roads and prepare to plant teak trees. Global Agricultural Development (Cambodia) Co. Ltd (Chinese Investment Company) began bulldozing 9800<sup>3</sup> hectares of land and started to divide the area into plots set out for new plantations and the company's offices. Those activities have had heavy negative impacts to the people of Kbal Dam Rey and O Kreang communes. Amongst others, the O Tanoeng villagers came into a confrontation with the Global Agricultural Development Company because this company had been granted a concession in the area of the village encroaching upon their rice fields and limiting their rights to use natural forest resources. The O Tanoeng village is one of five villages under administration of Kbal Dam Rey commune and has therefore been selected for an intensive study to examine the problems of inaccessibility to resources and their responses to the project. In addition, the village is located in the center of the commune that could be potential to understand decentralization policy which has been known as a channel for local participation in community development and natural resource management in this area.

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<sup>3</sup> Agreement for Teak Tree and Processing Factory between The MAFF and Global Agriculture Development (Cambodia) Co.; LTD, signed on 15 March 2007

### 1.6.2 Research Site

Kratie province is located below Ratanakiri Province of Northeastern Cambodia, a distance of 340 km by road or 220 km via the Mekong River to the capital of Phnom Penh. It shares a border with Stung Treng province to the North, Mondulakiri province to the East, Kampong Cham province and the neighboring country of Vietnam to the South and Kampong Thom province to the West. This province has been divided into five districts<sup>4</sup>, in which there are 46 communes. The area of the province is 11,094 square kilometers or 1,109,400 hectares. The total population is 276,693 people consisting of 142,304 (51.43%) females. There are eight minority groups living in Kratie: Cham, Phnong, Kouy, Samre, Steang, Mil, Kraol and Kaonh.

The province is divided North-South by the Mekong River and its narrow floodplains. Most of the province consists of undulating uplands, including lowland/upland mosaic and upland forested areas. It is classified as a rural province (MAFF, 2007). It has plenty of forest and wildlife, while the Mekong River constitutes a major water supply. Along the river there are many channels and lakes, with a variety of aquatic resources. The deepest part of the river is a dolphin refuge. The dolphin is a rare animal, the symbol of the province and a tourist attraction. The province has a small area, only 8 percent is for agriculture stretching along the Mekong River and near the river are channels and lakes that are fishing areas covering also 8 percent or 88,752 hectares. The biggest part of the province is forestland which covers 83.5 percent or 926,349 hectares, and red soil occupies an area of 0.5 percent or 5,547 hectares (Provincial Investment Plan 2006-08 of Kratie).

The province is categorized as upland and forested province amongst 11 forested provinces<sup>5</sup> of the kingdom, which covers about 90 percent of the nation's evergreen and semi-evergreen forest. Those forested provinces, which are mainly located in the north-central, northeastern, and southwestern areas of the country, represent about half of Cambodia's forest cover area (3.7 million hectares evergreen and 1.5 million hectares semi-evergreen). Within these provinces, there are 2000 villages with 1.4 million people living within five km of evergreen and semi-

<sup>4</sup> Kratie Province comprises of five districts: Sambor, Preaek Prasab, Chhlong, Kratie and Snoul.

<sup>5</sup> 11 forested provinces are Battambang, Kratie, Kampong Tom, Koh Kong, Mondulakiri, Pursat, Preah Vihear, Oddor Meanchey, Ratanakiri, Siem Reap, and Stung Treng

evergreen forest. Kratie province alone consists of 183 villages. A high proportion of the people in these villages have forest-dependent livelihoods (McKenney et al, 2004).

The richness of forest resources in this upland province was heavily destroyed under logging concessions since the 1980s. During the 1980s, 75,000 hectares of forested area was granted to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam on a year-to-year basis (Curtis, 1989 cited in Mc Kenney and Tola, 2002). In the early 1990s, the forested area of this province was under the control of the Military Region 2 (MR2), and logging activities were expanded and continued until 2000. According to McKenny and Prom Tola, 2002, there were, during the 1990s, nine forestry concession companies that operated on 702,642 hectares of forestland in the province (table 1.1).

**Table 1.1 Forest Concessions in Kratie Province, 2002**

<b>Name of Company</b>	<b>Origin of Company</b>	<b>Area (ha)</b>
GAT International Co., Ltd	Malaysia	23,475
Casotim Co., Ltd	Cambodia/Russia	131,380
Samling International Ltd.	Malaysia	143,350
Pheapimex Fuchan Cambodia Co., Ltd	Taiwan/Cambodia	68,563
King Wood Industry Pte, Ltd	Taiwan	63,100
Everbright CIG Wood Co., Ltd	China	50,225
Timas Resources Ltd	Singapore	22,437
Chung Shing Cambodia Co., Ltd	Taiwan	135,787
Thai Boon Roong Co.Ltd	Cambodia	64,325
<b>Total</b>		<b>702,642</b>

*Source: McKenny, Bruce and Prom Tola, 2002*

The selected research site is located in Kbal Damrey Commune, which is one amongst 46 communes of Kratie Province. It is called O Tanoeng village, located in the center of the commune (Figure 2). The village is one amongst five villages of Kbal Damrey Commune, which has 130 households in total, consisting of 615 persons. The 30 percent of the village households was chosen for deep interviews for this study. The Kbal Dam Rey (means *elephant's head*) commune is categorized as a forested location, located about 55 km to the northeast of the Kratie provincial town. It has an area of 407 Square kilometers, and has been settled since the 1940s.

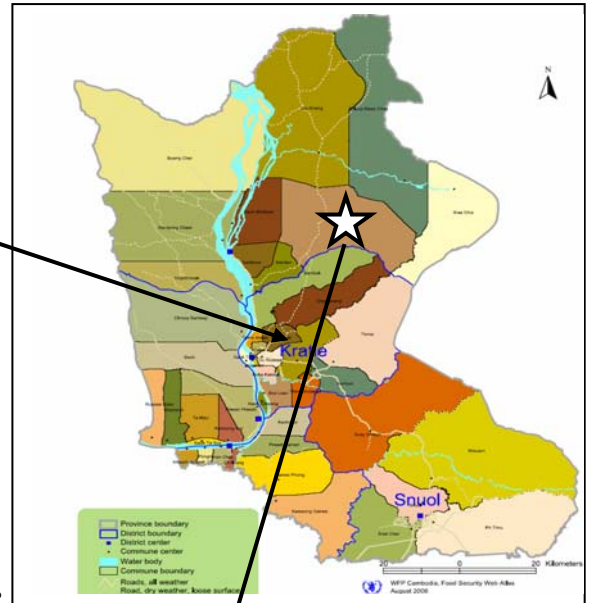




Map of Cambodia

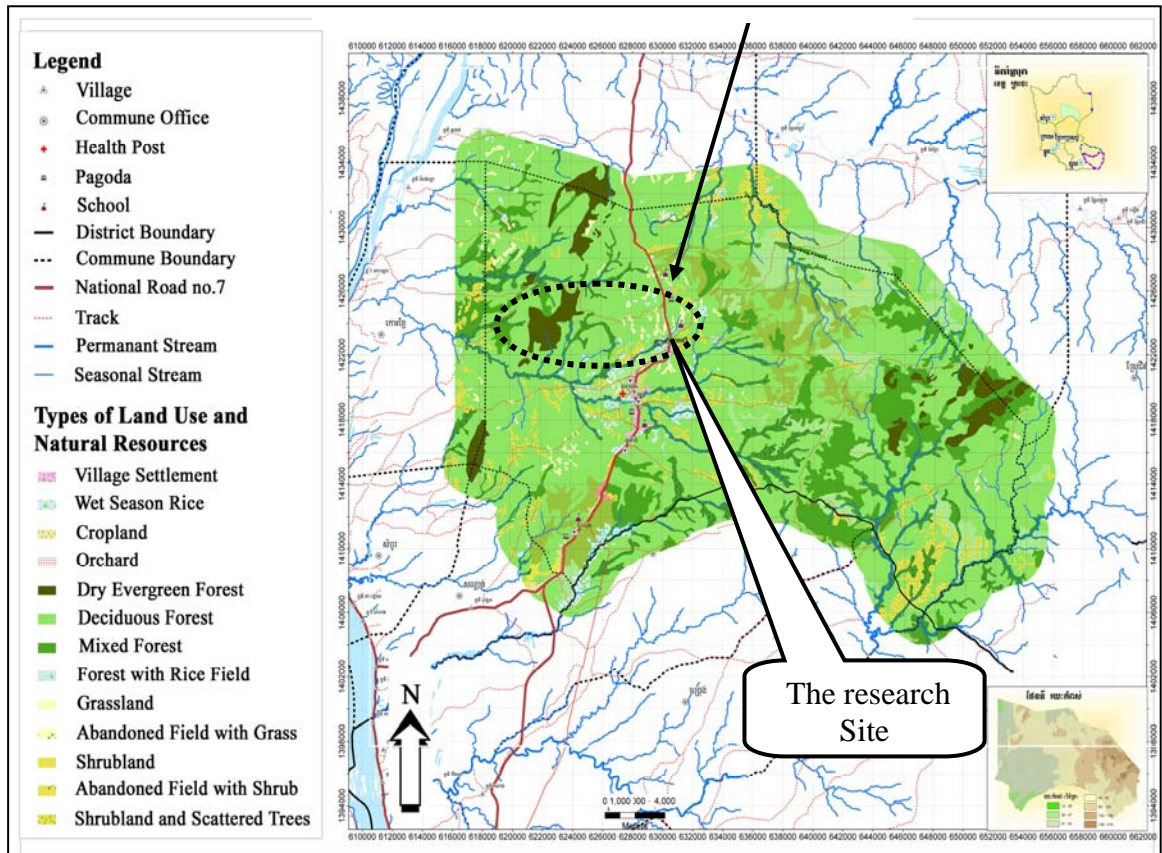
<http://bongthom.com/Maps/default.asp/IDM=38>

Edited by Mr. Puttipong



Map of Kratie Province

Map of Kbal Damrey Commune



**Figure 1.2 Location of O Tanoeng Village in Kbal Damrey Commune**

Source: Department of Provincial Land Mgt, Urban Planning and Construction, Krt.

Edited by Mr. Puttipong

The communal geography is rich with the forest resources. A commune land use and natural resources map of Kbal Dam Rey Commune, which was produced in 2006 by the Department of Provincial Land Mgt, Urban Planning and Construction of Kratie province, reveals that the commune consists of 110 hectares of dry evergreen broad leafed forest, 48,531 hectares of deciduous forest, 2,422 hectares of mixed forest (evergreen and deciduous), 1,848 hectares of forest with patches of rice field, 481 hectares of grassland, 33 hectares of abandoned field covered by grass, 5,824 hectares of shrub land, 8 hectares of abandoned field covered by shrub and 1,929 hectares of shrub land and scattered trees. The main income for the villagers' livelihood is based on wet rice and *Cham Kar* cultivation. Complementarily, they enter the forest to gather non-timber products (Five years Development Plan, 2003-2007).

### **1.6.3 Methodology**

Land concession issues drew my attention to find out what actually happened on the ground. I first talked to my friend who is an advisor for the Natural Resource and Environment Management (NREM) project in Kratie province. The project has been implemented in all 46 communes of the province. Since he had some project activities in Kbal Damrey commune to monitor, I accompanied him to visit the commune in early May 2007. At that time I had a good opportunity to talk with all commune officers, and we went to visit some places in the commune including new red soil roads constructed by economic land concession companies. As I have some experience of work with rural communities I took that opportunity to build a good relationship with the commune councilors (CC) and also with local people through carefully listening to them and flexibly sharing my understanding and respectfully having fun with them.

Talking to the Commune councilors in the office, I introduced myself as a government official from the Ministry of Rural Development (MRD), and that I was the one who has been sent to study about development in Thailand, by the ministry. This claim allowed me to easily work on my research project, because commune authorities have traditionally been associated with administration hierarchy. However, I played the role of a student from who wanted to study about development and the

way of forest dweller lives. This strategy helped me to get close to the local people and to have a chance to listen to them talk about their way of life, perceptions on economic land concession issues and some other development work in the community. Besides going to the village, I also talked to some NREM staff, local NGOs and some relevant provincial departments such as the Cambodian Community Development (CCD), Community Economic Development (CED), Provincial Department of Land management, Department of Rural Development and so forth, to learn and receive information concerning development issues at my research site as well as in Kratie province .

My first visit to the commune, in particular in O Tanoeung Village, was finished within one week. I received general information from the commune office and some local perceptions on development issues which were a basic step for me to find some more secondary data from different sources including government institutes, NGOs, and libraries. Those documents were brought to Chiang Mai to shape up my research proposal. Following my research proposal examination on 24 September 2007, I returned back to my research site—O Tanoeung Village, Kbal Damrey Commune for a second time. From early November until the end of December 2007, my research project was carried out. This period of time is the busiest time of the year for villagers while they harvest their paddy rice.

Luckily, I was accepted to stay with a nine-member family in O Tanoeung village. This family was very kind and has a good relationship with many people in the village. Even though the head of the family is a widow, the family's economic status is good compared to many other villagers. Within almost two months, I was very close with the 27-year-old eldest son of this family. We always slept under the same mosquito net, and talked about many things. From this opportunity, I learned a lot about the villagers and some local authorities. However, my presence in the village as a learner was again for a two-week period in the second half of April 2008 to observe and explore more on the local livelihood strategies during the dry season when the villagers are free from rice cultivation.

Ultimately, this study is based on secondary and primary data. Secondary data, which were found from different sources, provided me with overview information that helped me to better understand the economic development processes in Cambodia.

Some secondary data provided me with a wide range of advantages of such development while some provided me with not only their disadvantages, but also revealed the impacts of those development projects on society, natural resources and environment, and local people's livelihood. The data can also reflect on social, economic, political, ecological condition in the local as well as in the country. However, primary data are necessary to help me to understand complexity of the local people's lives and their perception on current development practice, and it could also verify reliability of the secondary data. Since I focused on impacts of economic land concessions for commercial tree plantation projects on locals' livelihood and decentralized resources management policy, I employed some important methods to collect primary data from the village level such as participant observation, group discussion, key informant interview, and household survey.

- **Group Discussion**

Group discussion method was used to capture some information from different groups within the village. The discussion was done with commune councilors to seek information about community development, their responsibilities and their perspective on economic land concessions in the community. Group discussion was also applied with the villagers in order to understand the local's perspective of the development, including development planning process and implementation development projects in the community, particularly in the natural resource management. In addition, I discussed about the people's access to forest and forestland before and after economic land concessions arrived, and the way of their thinking and resistance to commercial agricultural production in their community. Within this method, some research tools were used in the process of discussion such as Mapping, Venn diagram, Drawing and Calendar of livelihood activities. This method allowed me to understand the village's situation, the livelihood strategies of the villager and the perceptions on development and natural resource utility and management of different groups.

- **Key Informant Interview**

Power relations in a society are not equal, thus a person could freely express his/her ideas whenever she/he feels secure to talk. Moreover, some information may

only be received from specific individuals. Hence, key informant interview method was applied in this study. The key informants were selected from the villagers who were from different social status, and a local NGO. An old villager who has lived in the village since his birth, a teacher, a military official, a commune official, a village head, and some poor farmers were individually chosen and interviewed. Each time I went to the village and stayed within the village, I sometimes walked and sometime rode a bicycle to visit villagers from one family to another in the evening. Generally, I was welcome, and asked some questions. With such a practical technique, I had a chance to closely talk with their individual household members and build a good relationship with them. Building up a good relationship with the villagers is necessary to make the local people willingly express their ideas and knowledge. This key information interview was crucial to obtain critical information such as history of the village, traditional livelihood strategies of the villagers, some development issues, and social relations within the village.

- **Household Survey**

Household survey method was used to collect primary data from individual households of the research site. In this process, 30 households were selected from the total 130 households of O Tanoeung village as a sample for interviewing. The selected households were based on the household name list which was prepared and collected during my research (see Chapter IV, section 4.1.2.1). In order to gather information from the 30 household samples of the 130 households, all households in the household name list were divided into groups by counting from the first household to ninth household to create one group. I kept doing so until the household name number 126. Hence, I got fourteen groups in total—each group consisted of nine households. Then, two households were taken from each group, thus I got 28 households from the 14 groups, and the other two households were taken from the household name list which left four households after grouping. Therefore, I got a total of 30 households as a sample for this study.

This method helped me to discover the households' profile, living conditions, livelihood activities, social relations as well as locals' perceptions on economic land concession projects and natural resource management in the community. To practice

this method, a questionnaire was designed based on the questions, objectives and conceptual framework of this study. The interview took place with individual households, which were selected using the above method. Generally, the question responders were the heads of the household. However, the information was not only gathered through the prepared questions, but was also collected through free talking about issues of concern under a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere.

- **Participant Observation**

Participant observation was used to explore the on-going development activities such as meetings and implementation of local development projects that are observable during the field visits as well as everyday life practice of the locals. This gave a light and better understanding of project activities and of people's participation organized through the communal authorities and the local community themselves, local activities responding to tree plantation companies and the way of practice in everyday life of the community as well. Using this method, I sometimes went to the rice field with the villagers to harvest rice, because I was in the village during rice harvesting season. The villagers in this community still have tradition of exchange labor in rice production. To harvest a villager's rice, there were about 20 to 30 people come to help each other to collect rice yields.

In addition, I walked a whole day in the forest with two young men and a 46-year-old man. We went with the purpose of hunting game. On that day, I left the village at 7:15 in the morning with the two young men and we walked about 6 kilometers through a deciduous forest. Along the way, we called at some farmers' houses which were their second houses built near their rain-fed rice fields. On the same morning, we relaxed and had lunch at the house of the 46-year-old man whose family is very much dependent on natural resources. This house is the farthest from the village compared to the others and close to the land concession area. That man clearly knows that area because he often goes into that area to collect forest products and hunt wild animals for his family's consumption. After lunch, we continued to secretly walk the concession area to seek wild animals, and to see the forest situation and the forest area that was proposed to be a community forest. On the same day, I came back to the village by the ox-cart of the 46-year-old man, and we arrived in the

village about 9:35 in the evening. Through this kind of participant observation method, I was able to learn a lot from the villagers' culture which is close with the natural resources in the community.

#### **1.6.4 Data Analysis**

To analyze the impacts of economic land concession and the forest community's response to the impacts, quantitative and qualitative methods were employed to analyze data. Qualitative data were categorized and interpreted as a descriptive form of analysis in parallel to the concepts of state power in natural resource management as enforcement, local community participation in resource management, and local response to monoculture as a livelihood strategy. The concepts were relatively framed in order to answer research questions and to reach the objective of this study. The critical analysis was based on the interpretation of livelihood activities and ideas of interviewees, and the village situation to understand the complexity of the local situation under economic land concession pressure and how the local people respond to such land concession. In order to classify data in an understandable way, quantitative methods were also used to provide descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage to show population characteristics, occupational structure, households, type of land use, livestock and quantity of forest product collection in the village.

#### **1.7 Thesis Organization**

This thesis consists of six chapters. The research is based on three main concepts, including: (1) state power in natural resource management as enforcement, (2) local community participation in resource management, and (3) local response to monoculture as a livelihood strategy. It attempts to understand the issues after economic land concessions for commercial tree plantations have been placed in the local community.

Chapter I has provided the information which helps to understand the context of this study. The brief introduction explained and discussed the research problem, research questions and objectives. The conceptual framework has been presented for this study and has been followed by the methodology and Thesis organization.

In chapter II, the theoretical basis is reviewed for this study. To understand social actors involved in natural resource utilization and management, in particular natural forest resources in Cambodia, three main concepts are reviewed, including (1) state power in natural resource management as enforcement, (2) local community participation in resource management, and (3) local response to monoculture as a livelihood strategy.

Chapter III is mainly based on existing secondary data to review the change in land resource tenure and development processes in Cambodia. In Cambodia, land and other resources attached with the land are essentially important economic resources and assets to Cambodian people for hundreds of years. The form of land tenure in Cambodia, however, changed since the arrival of French colonialism. The French introduced land ownership through instituting land administration. Following French colonial withdrawal, the independent Cambodian government employed the concept of land ownership, but the progress in land management was limited.

In chapter IV, the O Tanoeng village history and profile are briefly described to explore the study site, followed by land use and livelihood activities of the villagers. The village was settled in that region for a hundred years. It was moved from the old location, which is far from the current one, in the 1940s. This village is the center of Kbal Damrey Commune, Sambo District, Kratie province. The infrastructures and social services are notably poor.

In Chapter V, obstruction of forestry community establishment within decentralization framework and the local responses to arrival of economic land concession companies are examined to understand the dynamics of natural resource management and utilization by different actors, the state and local people.

Chapter VI is the conclusion. The chapter provides the summary of the main study findings and the discussion on these findings regarding to some reviewed concepts and literature. It also provides some recommendations to contribute to development policy and practices in Cambodia, and some questions are also pointed for further research.



## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL DEBATES**

The last two decades of the twentieth century have seen a growing awareness of the limits of development models that look towards government bureaucracies to assume the leadership in developing the people. They too often have resulted in programs that undermine the inherent capacity of people to meet their needs through local initiatives, leaving them dependent on centrally subsidized bureaucracies, which absorb vast resources while paying less attention to the basic needs of the local people. Most undeveloped countries, tried to compete with their highest stage of economic demand in the development, which was set up and guided by some advanced countries through their international agencies, in the form of financial aid, technical assistance, and development projects in the poor nations in the area of poverty reduction, food security, education, and infrastructural improvement.

In this regard, developing nations have tried to accumulate profit from all sectors, including from natural resources, to fulfill the demands of economic growth and global market application. Industrialization, monopolization and standardization have been considered (usually by nation-states) as significant notions for such growth and are too often associated with conflicts and competition over natural resources between the actors involved. Ultimately, it has threatened the local people's livelihood, and natural resources and environments have also been degraded.

Consequently, for developing countries, 'sustainable' development means the continued pursuit of development with the purpose of alleviation of poverty and reaching the status of "modern" societies (Grainger, 2004). In fact, sustainable development is the development process that means the process that fulfills the present human needs without endangering the opportunities of the future generations to fulfill their needs (WCED, 1987). That is the process toward a better quality of human life, especially for general and ordinary people. However, in these days, that development model has been shifted to a new model 'development from below'; though whether power will be truly decentralized is still questionable.

## **2.1 State Power in Natural Resource Management as Enforcement**

“Economic growth” is a powerful term, which is the most popular for many nation-states and other economies under the capitalist perspective. The term has subordinated the word ‘development’. This ‘development’ has too often been in the form of resource extraction, industrialization, consumption, or waste production. Coming to the end of the twentieth century, some poor countries started to experience economic development, particularly in South-East Asia. The economic growth of those countries has been fostered by integration, or globalization, of the world economic system which has been the impetus to increase investment and trade amongst developed and developing countries.

To understand the dynamics of economic growth in developing countries that those nation states have committed by trying to accumulate the profits from natural resources to fulfill such growth, that led to be prominent in their powers of natural resource management, control and exploitation; I will therefore review the concept of “state power in natural resource management as enforcement”. I will focus on; first, “the politics of forestland management” to illustrate the nation-state’s ability to exercise its exclusive power to control forestland and; second, “monoculture in politics of ‘sustainable’ development” to examine how agricultural plantations contribute to sustainable development under the capitalist perspective, which is usually accepted by “modern” states, and how this perspective contradicts with views of environmental activists who would argue that the application of ‘monoculture’ is not ‘sustainable’ development.

### **2.1.1 The Politics of Forestland Management**

Nation states usually try to expand their power to control and manage everything within their national boundary by establishing certain structures, laws, regulations, and characterizing those things in order to effectively control its populous. In this sense, Scott (1998) emphasizes the concept of simplification as a form of knowledge and control. He illustrates that the modern state likes to simplify everything in order to control and manage its people easier. Focusing on forest and forestland resources, ordinary people and nation-states have different interests. Historically, states use forest and land resources for commerce and/or other purposes

of feeding the national economy, while most local/indigenous people use them for subsistence.

Claiming forestland and forest resources as “state property” has been a tactic made since colonial time until present time. Bromley (1991) explains that in a state property regime, ownership and control over use rests in the hands of the state. Individuals and groups may be able to use the natural resources, but only with the forbearance of the state. Delineation of national parks, national forests, military-based protected areas and so on, is a way to legitimize the exercising of exclusive managerial power of modern states on natural resources. Those properties can be possibly shifted from state property to other types of property or vice versa. For instance, in 1957, the Nepalese government nationalized the village forests’ common property regime (open access) at the village level into a state property regime. Similarly in Cambodia, after the first general election in 1993, the Cambodian government created more than 30 forestry concession zones covering about 6.5 million hectares and privatized those zones for exploitation; they were cancelled in 2002. This shows a shift from state property into private property and then, reverting them back to state property again. Practically, we may see states that are able to either manage or control the use of that resource through government agencies, or to lease it to groups or individuals, giving usufruct rights for a specified period of time.

State property is generally seen as infrastructure, areas of land or water including all its natural resources such as forests, fish, mineral resources, and other things that are under a state’s territory. Governments intend to use these resources to accumulate the capital needed for maintaining the governments’ expenditures and to gain benefits for other purposes of the nation. Neumann (2005) reveals that modern states claim sovereignty over the land and natural resources within their territorial boundaries and thus sole authority to regulate their use. States come into ‘being’ by asserting control over the mosaics of the commons, dispossessing local and non-state entities of their pre-existing claims and rights in the process (the Ecologist, 1993 cited in Neumann, 2005). States assert control through scientific and technical acts of surveying, inventorying, zoning and mapping the living resources of its territory, most relevantly forested lands (Scott, 1998 and Bryant, 1997).

In Cambodia, the land law that was adopted in 2001 and the Sub-Decree on State Land Management that was placed in 2005 claims that “state public land is land with a public interest use, and includes property having a natural origin, such as forests”. State private land is all land that is neither state public land nor legally privately or collectively owned or possessed under this law. The Sub-Decree on State Land Management sets out the framework for state land identification, mapping, registration and classification, and notes where additional administrative guidelines are required. Under the umbrella of this law, 59 economic land concessions will remain by December 2006, covering an area of 943,069 hectares in 15 provinces (MAFF, 2006).

Economic land concessions are intended to be part of the framework of poverty reduction and rural development set out in the National Strategic Development Plan 2006-2010. In particular, they are intended to develop land in an appropriate and perpetual manner, based on appropriate ecological systems; provide increased employment in rural areas; and generate state revenue. However, Human Rights (2007) reports that economic land concessions are not meeting these objectives. Concessionaires are not managing land in an appropriate or sustainable manner, with respect to existing ecological systems, and there do not appear to be any tangible benefits for local communities. In general, the concessions have not brought employment to affected rural communities.

Introducing land reform is a tactic of land management for economic purposes. Modern states set up land reform programs to ensure exploitation occurs as much as possible. Land is the prime source of capital, wealth, and employment. For most of elite individuals, the nature of land tenure relations is very important to economic and political development. Thus property titles and ownership become essential for economic transformation, which then pave the way to industrialization. Investors need security on land tenure to use those lands for the large-scale and long-term agricultural production and/or to raise the capital by using land to mortgage for an approaching loan. It is also easy for those governments to tax. With economic purposes, the transformation into indigenous tenures has been done to attract both domestic and foreign investment. With plantation farming, the provision of title, boundaries, and legal identity for plots of land become a paramount concern. The title,

which had both a system of central registration and demarcation of precise boundaries, was essential to provide security for those investors (Cleary and Eaton, 1996).

Peluso (1992) reveals that in Java regarding the Agrarian Law of 1870, all lands that could not be proven to be owned by villagers were state property. This law was the central policy of privatization on wastelands of 75 year leases with the purpose of estate development. It also became the basis for the Forest Service's claims to all lands except those under small scale or plantation agriculture. Within the control of claimed land, foresters established managerial regulations and mechanisms, and also rearranged the existing administration in order to control land and forest.

Cleary and Eaton (1996) argue that the establishment of different systems of land tenure was critical both in revealing the underlying economic rationale behind changes in land tenure, and in creating some of the most serious land tenure problems in the region today. Increasingly, competition in land use (the most significant feature of tenure) has been the method of registering titles. This provides a system of recording land ownership that includes all rights, dealings, and encumbrances; holdings were surveyed and boundaries and locations precisely defined and illustrated by a plan that formed part of the register. In this sense, for the landowner, the certificate of title provides proof of ownership, which gives greater security and incentive to develop the land. It also provides a guarantee for the raising of loans for this purpose. Land transfers were facilitated, there was less possibility of mistake or fraud and disputes and litigation were reduced. For governments, the record of ownership provided by registration was of great value to land administration, the imposition of taxes, the planning, and the implementation of land reforms.

In the sense of Cleary and Eaton's argument, political ecologists analyze land and resource tenure as a '*political process*'. Neumann (2005) expresses that land tenure reform is often a highly charged politicized process that produces winners and losers. Rather than fixing universally agreed upon property rights in statutory law, titling and privatization often spark new controversies and political struggles over land access. Providing land ownership titles, the local people may feel happy because they have actual exclusive right over piece(s) of land within their life-world or their experiences of life. In fact, such land certificates are an effective tool to peacefully

exclude local people, especially forest dwellers, from state land (like dividing things: this is yours and this is mine) by providing to others that everyone has been allocated ownership to some pieces of land, while other lands are state lands or belong to the nation state. Hence, the state can legitimately occupy or allocate its land to someone else or any group for the purpose of exploitation, usually granted to large-scale commercial production. In doing so, the traditional rights of access to land or forest products of local people have been limited and the locals themselves may not take any serious actions against government exploitation of forest or forestland.

In general, state power can be observed and understood through its coercive or controlling organizations; other social forces and groups and the effectiveness of those organizations (Blaikie 1985 cite in Peluso, 1992). These structures and relationships can show the nature of state control of forests and other natural resources. It is important to know what drives the dynamics of state forest control and what gives rise to the state's use of coercion. For instance, in 1989, the Thai government returned to an increasingly militarized approach in carrying out its forest conservation policies with disregard for local complexities (Anan, 1998).

According to Anan (1998), the policy of forest conservation became a very political sense in Thailand in 1989. The Royal Forest Department (RFD) continues to evict highland villagers from conservation forest, and the government allows lowlanders and investors to utilize upland areas for many intentions in the name of national development. However, the result rendered both contradictions in forest policy and the aggravation of conflicts with local villagers. In addition, the relocation programs establishing new national parks, have threatened the security of tenure of the local villagers who usually have only customary rights to access resources in the forest. The government believes that the presence of ethnic people was regarded as endangering forest conservation, despite commercialization being a main factor. One must conclude that the government has more trust in market-managed conservation than people-managed conservation.

Sovathana (2004) reveals that land and forest resources were subject to land and logging concessions, and the establishment of wildlife sanctuaries, tourism sites, and hydropower projects. In many instances, the Cambodian government has tended to exclude local people from access to natural resources through granting land and

forest concessions for national and international entrepreneurs to extract natural resources in ethnic minority communities. After general elections in 1993, land and forest concessions were granted without the ethnic minority community's acknowledgement or participation. During this time, ethnic minority people, especially Kreung People in Yak Kaol community, faced difficulties in practicing traditional methods of agriculture, competition for resource utilization, and encroachments onto ethnic community land. It is easy to find examples of the government authorizing land and forest concessions to private companies and protected areas in Northeastern Cambodia, where the total is about 1.500.000 hectares.

Sovathana also found that the development that has been encountered in Northeastern Cambodia brought changes in local community systems and community rights to utilize land and forest resources. The Cambodian government has long considered upland communities a source of state revenue. Various government development agencies have implemented highland development projects, with very good intent toward improving the living conditions of the local people. Actually, they have promoted commercialization with cash crop production. Hence land and forest resources in the community have been lost through the granting of logging and land concessions. Meanwhile, the government has accumulated local resources and increased penetration of upland community structures. These interventions have threatened and suppressed local cultural practices, natural resource tenure systems, and the livelihoods of the locals.

Nation states always force people to accept any development programs that exert control over the land, water and/or any other natural resources. They are powerful tools to strip indigenous people of their rights to natural resource utilization. In exercising state power, the central government often makes decisions that seriously violate indigenous peoples' human rights. Normally, indigenous people/local people suffer from violence, including intimidation, torture or murder; mainly when they have fought for their rights with government or private sector projects. There has been no recognition of the autonomy of customary law of indigenous people and absolutely no representation in the decision-making bodies of the state, even if local government.

### **2.1.2 Monoculture in Politics of “Sustainable” Development**

Monoculture is a kind of plantation system of commercial farming associating with large, specialized farm or plantation for such crops as bananas, cocoa, coconuts, coffee, oil-palm, rubber, teak, eucalyptus, sugar and tea. Such plantation systems refer to large-scale efforts combined with agricultural and industrial enterprises that are both labor intensive and capital intensive. It also raises, and usually processes industrially, agricultural commodities for the world market. Size and processing equipment are often important criteria, and large-scale enterprises may ultimately become agribusiness (Hodder, 2000).

The concept of ‘monoculture’ is perceived by modern states as a “sustainable” development technique in natural resource and environmental management. With respect to a capitalist perspective, “modern” states usually implement mono-tree plantations in large areas as natural resource and environmental improvement. In contrast, environmental activists argue that the application of ‘monoculture’ is not “sustainable” development. Rationally, under large-scale plantations, nation states try to create a set of laws, regulations and mechanisms to manage natural resources such as forests, land, water and fish, etc. Often, the state or powerful groups (usually businessmen and organized criminals) use force and violent means to evict, or deny access to local communities from their land and forests. Moreover, promotion of mono-tree plantations is a politic of ‘green’ image that is destroying the complexity of natural ecological systems of nature. Rapid increases in exploitation-oriented industrial development are dynamically exclusive of the existing community rights. This is creating a lot of conflicts and competitions over natural resources between actors, that have led to degeneration of natural resources and environment.

In South East Asia, the political issues and the problems associated with “politics” of sustainable development and environmental change can be seen through the exploitation of the region’s forest resources. Uneven economic growth and pervasive environmental degradation in the region provide a platform to criticize the state’s policies as mechanisms of economic incentives for large-scale logging, mining and other destructive activities, with the benefit from those activities going to elite people.



As the concept of ‘sustainable development’ has emerged, Bryant and Parnwell (1996) point out that the meaning of ‘sustainable development’ is not an easily understandable concept: It means many things to many people. It is increasingly used as a center to classify economic activities according to their apparent ‘greenness’ such as some certain activities related to ecotourism and plantation forests are ‘sustainable; or lack thereof, such as some activities related to manufacturing and clear-cut logging are conversely ‘unsustainable’. They argued that this classificatory exercise, however, fails to take into account the location-specific nature of certain economic activities—what might be sustainable in one context might be unsustainable in another. They highlight Brookchin’s idea that, if ‘a capitalist society based on competition and growth for its own sake must ultimately devour the natural world, just like untreated cancer must ultimately devour its host’ then a reformist approach that promotes ‘greener’ activities is inevitably doomed to failure—unless the social context within which it is applied changes.

An unprecedented scale of environmental change in the region is considered the result of integration of the region into a globalizing capitalist economy that has been in formation since the colonial era, and has become greater in post-colonial times. Such integration has been linked to political processes that have prompted South-East Asia’s emergence as one of the key natural resource regions in the world. However, the main impetus for widespread deforestation was permanent agriculture, with cleared land being used to produce such cash crops as coffee, tea, rubber, sago, palm oil, rice, abaca, and sugar cane. Such permanent agriculture has been expanded because the modern states provide a package of incentives, such as granting a tax holiday and legal titles to the land, to peasants to facilitate the process of conversion of forest to fields; and also funding the construction of canals and embankments, and improved river and land transportation networks, ‘to facilitate the movement of labor and export products and to make cultivation of empty lands possible’ (Bryant and Parnwell, 1996).

In response to environmental degradation, the concept of sustainable development has been promoted, particularly in the South-East Asian states, and non-state groups have generally accepted. However, this concept has been given different meaning by different groups. Developing states have too often sought to reform

logging practices in the past by keeping with a 'forestry action plan' with the assistance of Western aid agencies and consultants. However, such efforts have been criticized, saying it is a way to mask natural resource exploitation. Then, state-sponsored activities such as ecotourism and plantation forestry are hailed as being the epitome of 'sustainable development', as such activities are just part of the "green" image, causing more serious environmental problems and affecting local livelihoods.

The Thai nation-state's perception claims that tree plantation is a form of forest management called "silviculture". Plus, Thai forestry academics mention that tree plantations would revive and improve forest conditions or replace the forest destroyed by cultivation and illegal logging as well as "the villagers' encroachment on the forest for farming and shifting cultivation by hill tribes". It would also contribute to economic production and generate national income and employment. Moreover, silviculturists compare in terms of economic timber value of forest, that natural forest can produce timber yields of only about five cubic meters per rai, while tree plantations can produce timber yields of more than seven times that much. But, Kuycharoen and Rajesh (2005) argue that during the period of colonialism, this "forestry science" spread alongside commercial logging. They pointed out that the forest policy of the Thai government was based on such rational ideas, and forest reserve areas are always characterized by the hidden political agenda of taking over land used by village people.

In the monoculture practice, natural forest and unwanted vegetation must be cleared to remove obstruction to the newly planted trees. Such a practice "replaces" natural forest with the commercial tree plantations. Kuycharoen and Rajesh note that such silvicultural practice will lead to destruction of the diversified vegetation of natural forest. They claim that an area deemed as degraded forest will still have numerous small and young trees that could regenerate themselves if left to nature. Many of those areas also provide a variety of uses for local people such as grazing and collecting of non-timber forest products. They highlighted that allowing the private sector to rent "degraded" forest areas for tree plantations will result in natural forest destruction.

Similarly, Scott (1998) argues that the logic of state-managed forest science was virtually identical with the logic of commercial exploitation. The next logical step

is forest management that attempts to create,—through careful seeding, planting, and cutting—a system that is easier for state forestry to count, manipulate, measure and assess. Forest science, backed by state power, has the capacity to transform the real, diverse, and chaotic old-growth forest into a new, more uniform forest that closely resembles the administrative grid of its techniques. In the aftermath, biodiversity is destroyed through planting in straight rows on large tracts that have been observed as monoculture and later leading to soil degradation. He mentioned that forest is full of biodiversity, but the administrators' forest cannot be the naturalists' forest, because their abstractions and simplifications are disciplined by a small number of objectives, the most prominent of these typically being taxation and political control.

Reviewing forest management in Java, Peluso (1992) reveals that conservation ideologies were a cloak for the main impetus behind forest exploitation and the Forest Service—the extraction of surplus for the state. The policy of planting actually can not sustain hydrological functions of mountainous forests. Teak was to replace non-teak forest species even on land that was very well-suited to agriculture, where other climatic and soil conditions were conducive to its vigorous growth. Such policy was meant, explicitly, to increase future state revenues. As a result, people lost access to the natural forest products when teak plantations replaced them. Moreover, the introduction of teak plantations sometimes resulted in reduced water supplies on adjacent village lands (Peluso, 1992).

In the eyes of the locals and environmentalists, the state reforestation campaign is a way to replace the natural forestry by mono-tree plantation that is both ecologically destructive and detrimental to local villagers' interests. In contrast, nation-states defend that tree plantations would revive and improve forest conditions or replace the forests that have been destroyed, as well as contribute to economic production and generate national income and employment. However, the state's actions are often in conjunction with private businesses that have played a prominent part in generating environmental problems. As a result, civil society activism has risen up to oppose such destructive activities of environmental and natural resources, through different forms of resistance such as media publicity, boycott campaigns and so on.

## **2.2 Local Community Participation in Resource Management**

Agrawal and Gibson (2001) note that the communities are complex entities containing individuals differentiated by status, political and economic power, religion and social prestige, and intention. Hence, the perception of 'community' is most important to people who advocate positive roles for the 'community' in resource management; a community is usually received of as a small spatial unit, with homogenous social structure and shared norms. They also mention that the community is the best lens in which to look at the multiple interests and actors in the community, the multiple actors with multiple interests that make up communities, the process through which these actors interrelate, and especially, institutional arrangements that structure their arrangements. Thus, it will be useful to try to understand the factors critical to the success or failure of efforts aimed at local conservation.

How do actors perform in the decision making, and how do outsiders shape the decision making in the community? According to Agrawal and Gibson (2001), the community can be seen in different aspects, we cannot just generalize it by ignoring the differentiation of the processes around resource management, the differential access of actors, and the multiple levels of politics. Even in the small territory of community, they still find it difficult to withstand external threats or to manage resources. Therefore they suggest that we should focus on the divergent interests of multiple actors within communities, the processes which these interests emerge, and which of the various actors interact with each other, and also the institutions that influence the outcomes of political processes.

The CBNRM program presumed that resource users have rights to access resources essential to their livelihoods. These rights are typically complex, and can include overlapping customary and legal tenure rights, rights to different kinds of resources at different seasons, and rights which are recognized by different agents under different circumstances. These rights can be held by individuals, family groups or communities, which define them in various ways. They can be exclusive or shared, sometimes depending on the context. Formal or informal rights might only be translated into practical resource access and used under certain conditions. As natural resources in marginal areas come under more pressure from competing users and from

degradation, overlapping rights and tenures are increasingly contested (Vandergeest, 1997).

Tyler (2006) illustrates that lack of formal rights, conflict over rights, or loss of longstanding resource rights, all reduce the incentive for users to invest in managing the resource base which leads to degradation. Understanding these rights and the institutions through which they are contested is an important prerequisite for effective intervention and change (Tyler, 2006). “Local community” is therefore a focal site to which we can understand the process of natural resource management”.

### **2.2.1 Participation in Community Development**

Participation has been adopted as a strategy for rural development and resource management. Participation is seen as a strategy for the creation of opportunities to explore new, often open-ended directions with those who were traditionally the objects of development. Ideas about participation converge with concerns about giving the rural poor a voice in development decisions, access to productive assets and a share in the development benefits (Oakley and Marsden, 1984). According to Oakley and Marsden (1984), the participation of local people in the planning, decision-making and implementation of development activities has been recognized as an important aspect since the 1970s. They pointed out that the International Labor Organization (ILO) expresses “popular participation” as a fundamental goal of development.

According to a UNAPDI Report (1980); planning and development with people’s participation could have two distinct advantages. Firstly, it facilitates a better perception of basic issues at the ‘grassroots’ level, with specific attention to the rural poor, and the formulation and execution of the programs and projects to achieve stated objectives. Secondly, it provides opportunities for direct participation of the local population, particularly the poor majority, in development related to decision-making directly at the lowest level of a homogenous group, hamlet, or village and of representatives at higher levels such as sub-district or district level.

During the 1970s the idea of people’s participation attracted the attention of the United Nations and international agencies. The UN published the “Popular participation in development” which reviews the emergence of ideas of participation

with reference to community development projects in the third world, and the “popular participation in decision making for development” which offers a formal definition of the concept with reference to its implementation (UN, 1975 cited in Pongquan, 1992).

According to Rahnema (1997), there are three theorist groups that have similar ideas of ‘popular participation’. Participatory development activists believe that ‘popular participation’ can enable the grassroots populations to regenerate their life spaces, because it prevents hegemonistic and manipulative designs of development process. The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) defines popular participation as ‘the organized efforts to increase control over resources and movements of those hitherto excluded from such control over resources and the movement of those hitherto excluded from such control. For Participatory Action Research (PAR) theorists, the aims of such a participation is to achieve power: a special kind of power—people’s power—which belongs to the oppressed and exploited classes and groups and their organizations, and the defense of their just interests to enable them to advance their shared goals of social change within a participatory system. Rahnema notes that participation is advocated by PAR theorists as the only way to save development from degenerating into a bureaucratic, top-down and dependency creating institution. They do not question the validity of the institution, per se, which most of them consider could be a powerful instrument in the hand of the oppressed; they do insist, however, that, for development to play its historical role, it should be based on participation.

Based on the three theoretical groups above, Rahnema (1997) emphasizes three points about the assumptions underlying the popular participatory approach: (1) obstacles to people’s development can and should be overcome by giving the population concerned the full opportunity of participation in all the activities related to their development; (2) participation is justified because it expresses not only the will of the majority of people, but also it is the only way for them to ensure that the important moral, humanitarian, social, cultural, and economic objectives of a more humane and effective development can be peacefully attained; and (3) ‘dialogical interaction’, ‘conscientization’, ‘PAR’ and other similar activities can make it

possible for all the people to organize themselves in a manner best suited to meet their desired ends.

Popular participation has become a key element in creating an alternative, human-centered development. It is intended to perform at least four functions: cognitive, social, instrumental and political. In cognitive terms, the traditional development model has to be replaced by a different knowledge system that represents people's own cultural heritage, and locally produced experts through interaction. The political function of participation is to provide development with a new source of legitimation, assigning it the task of empowering the voiceless and the powerless, and also, eventually, of creating a bridge between the establishment and its target populations, including, even, the groups opposing development. The instrumental function of the participatory approach is to provide the 're-empowered' actors of development with new answers to the failures of conventional strategies, and to propose new alternatives, with a view towards involving the 'patients' in their own 'care' (the local people's need). In social terms, participation is the slogan that gave the development discourse a new lease on life. All institutions, groups and individuals involved in development activities rallied around this new construct in the hopes that the participatory approach would finally enable development to meet everyone's basic needs and wipe out poverty in all its manifestations.

Through the influence of international agencies on national governments, people's participation becomes recognized as in need of a greater emphasis in the context of community based development projects as of recent. In this sense, people's participation is believed as an essential aspect of development. Huijsman and Savenije (1991) claim that the basis for building strong community- based environmental management systems and decision-making structures is to 'respect and make use of native wisdom and indigenous knowledge and experience, and to accept local decision making'; local specificity is a vital component of such planning.

Anan and Mingsan (1998) proposed that settlers in conservation forests should be encouraged and recruited to participate more in forest management if their indigenous systems can be sustainable. While government agencies have begun to show some positive concern over the social issues of rights, as seen in official pilot projects on community forestry like the Sam Mun Highland Development Project, and

the drafting of the community act, serious discussion of legal recognition of minorities' rights to live in the forests has not yet emerged. Consequently, Anan claims that "another kind of conservation policy that pays more attention to community rights and participatory management is urgently needed in order to strengthen the dynamic of local organizations and encourage their participation in forest conservation" (Anan, 1998).

Today, the concepts of 'development' and 'participation' have established a direct link between the two. Development is defined as economic growth with equitable distribution of the fruits of growth (World Bank, 1981 cited in Sawyer, 1993); participation is to be the nexus where people and government meet in the process of development. This nexus is to be located at the implementation stage of development projects. In this sense, Sawyer (1993) points out that decentralization has been introduced since the 1970s as a strategy to ensure participation. Therefore, I will review the implementation of decentralization policy in some developing countries to understand how it works.

### **2.2.2 Decentralized Natural Resource Management in Practice**

Placing local people at the center of natural resource management has been ignored in the past due to many scientists and economists strongly believing that only science and new technology are the means to sustainably manage natural resources and bring benefit to "economic growth"; while local knowledge and rights to natural resources have been considered as backward, uncivilized, irrational, mythical and superstitious and cannot be accepted in the context of sustainable development and modernity. This notion has been employed by most modern states practicing within a centralized framework in the past.

Towards the end of twentieth century, the conventional development, (development from 'above' or 'top-down' development) is increasingly battered (Friedmann, 1992 and Adams, 2001). It was widely argued that development goals could only be achieved by 'bottom-up planning', 'decentralization' and 'community development' (Agrawal and Gibson 1999). By the early 1990s, aid donors and development planners were heavily committed to participatory approaches (Adam, 2001).



Cambodia took this approach in the early 1990s for rural development to reduce poverty nation-wide. By 1996, the Seila Program<sup>1</sup> was established, known as an aid mobilization and coordination framework to support Cambodia's decentralization and deconcentration reforms. The policy of the government toward decentralization is an integral part of the broader state reform process, which has been supported by multi-donors, including UNDP, UNCDF, EU, WB, IFAD, UNHCR, DANIDA, the United Kingdom, The Netherlands, Sweden and Australia. The Cambodian government's decentralization policy has three central aims: first, to promote democracy, good governance and quality of life; second, to give ordinary people greater opportunities to determine their future; and third, to ensure sustainable development, including the delivery of basic services, (Seila Task Force, 2000).

From its start in 1996 through 2003, the Seila Program expanded its coverage each year to an increasing number of target communes and eventually provinces, based on capacity and resource availability. Through consultations between the government and donors, an agreement was reached that enabled the Seila Program to extend technical and financial resources to all 24 provinces as of April 2003, in support to all 1,621 communes. Within most communes, natural resource and environmental management projects have been implemented under the decentralization process of this program. Theoretically, this program believed that community-based natural resource management leads to sustainable use of the natural resources, protection of cultures, and securing of livelihoods for local communities.

Talking about decentralization, Agrawal and Ribot (1999) define decentralization as any act in which a central government formally cedes powers to actors and institutions at lower levels in a political-administrative and territorial hierarchy. Devolving powers to lower levels involves the creation of a realm of decision making in which a variety of lower-level actors can exercise some autonomy. Deconcentration (or administrative decentralization) is said to occur when powers are devolved to appointees of the central government. Political decentralization is different from deconcentration since powers in this case are devolved to actors or institutions that are accountable to the population in their jurisdiction. Typically,

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<sup>1</sup> The Seila program came to a close in December 2006. The activities carried out by Seila are now under the mandate of the National Committee for Management of the Decentralization and Deconcentration Reform (NCDD).

elections are seen as the mechanism that ensures accountability in political decentralization.

Agrawal and Ribot suggest that to learn the extent of meaningful decentralization you have to have understanding of the powers of various actors, the domains in which they exercise their powers, and to whom and how they are accountable to their constituents. Three distinct dimensions underlie all acts of decentralization: *actors*, *powers*, and *accountability*. The allocation of different sets of powers of decision making and rule making to lower-level actors creates decentralization. The effectiveness of decentralization hinges on a third dimension: accountability. They note that if powers are decentralized to actors who are not accountable to their constituents, or who are accountable only to themselves or superior authorities within the structure of the government, then decentralization is not likely to accomplish its stated aims. It is only when constituents come to exercise accountability as a countervailing power that decentralization is likely to be effective.

Agrawal and Ribot analyzed four case studies, in which the presumed benefits of decentralization became available to local populations only when empowered local actors were downwardly accountable. They mention that actors, powers, and accountability emerge as essential elements of a framework that can help evaluate the effectiveness of decentralization. However, they argue, in many countries, decentralization reforms do not attend to these elements. In Senegal, responsibilities in forest management were devolved to local elected councils without devolving access to the related commercial profits. In Burkina Faso, powers to cut, sell and manage forests have been devolved to private project-based committees, rather than to representative bodies. In Zimbabwe's campfire program, powers were transferred to District Development Committees who were largely under the control of the central government. In Nepal, one can point to projects that view decentralization as being accomplished simply by directing a stream of monetary benefits toward a group of resource users rather than attempting to create institutions that allow durable decision-making powers to local authorities.

Marschke (2004), in reviewing Cambodian development, reveals that, while it may make sense to endorse community-based management programs (such processes, theoretically, enable villagers to take action), it is more challenging to understand

what it really takes to enhance livelihoods, solve conflicts or increase access to resources for rural Cambodians. She mentions that village-level institutions often cannot engage in resource management through patrolling and enforcement without some form of higher level support, because social relations in Cambodia take place within an authoritarian, hierarchical context.

She notes that many government departments are mandated some responsibility related to resource management. Each government institution is working with its own policy makers to draft legislation. In some cases there is a strongly centralized planning emphasis, such as within the Forest Administration; in other cases there is a strongly decentralized planning emphasis, such as within the Ministry of Interior. Institutions are not always aware of, or connected with, other institutions doing similar things. Within the Law on Management and Administration of Communes, a broad clause allows commune councils to manage and protect natural resources (articles 41 and 43), although “Commune councils have no authority over forests” (article 45). According to the community forestry sub-decree, community forestry can take place with approval from the Forest Administration.

In the cases of granting economic land concessions, it is centralized decision-making from the central government—the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery (MAFF). Such granting of economic land concessions overrides local community development initiatives for the sustainable management of land and natural resources. For instance, in 2006, three economic land concessions were granted by MAFF over the land and forest which previously was “community forest” as acknowledged by the local authorities and local forestry officials, and supported by the Seila program and the Community Economic Development Organization (CED—local NGO) in Kbal Damrei commune, Sambo district in Kratie province since 2005. This may be a lack of what Agrawal and Ribot above suggested as “accountability” of the decentralization process.

Ayres (2001) labels Cambodian decentralization as in its infancy referring to the weakness of the decentralization. It is similar to Benjaminsen’s (1997) review of the decentralization reforms in Mali that reveal that the Malian government retained its centralized structures, and it paid lip service to “decentralization” in response to intermittent demands for a less centralized structure, but little change actually took

place. After March 1991, the Malian government prepared to review the structure and function of the administrative system of the state. This trend toward decentralization and redefinition of the role of the state as provider of an enabling environment is very much in line with international donor policies. In fact, these changes are not only encouraged, but may sometimes also be imposed by foreign aid donors. This would be true in the case of the Cambodian government, because it is funded by about US\$600 million a year by multi-donors in order to promote decentralization in Cambodia.

### **2.3 Local Response to Monoculture as Livelihood Strategies**

Commercial plantations' needs of clearing vegetation from a tropical moist forest biome leads to the breakdown of nutrient recycling systems, and those sites experience a rapid loss of soil fertility through leaching and surface run-off. Without a protective canopy, soils are exposed to heavy rainfall, winds and intense solar radiation which can result in impermeable laterite crusts. Elsewhere, invasive weeds and grasses quickly take hold, inhibiting the recovery of soil fertility, and can be difficult to manage (Sage, 1996). On the other hand, commercial plantations sometime encroach on the local community land, leading to destruction of agricultural and grazing land, and loss of access to non-timber forest products and destroyed rice fields and farm land belonging to the communities.

Different development options may have different impacts. Development may be seen as big business in ways which exploit natural resources, which brings change to local communities in different ways. Land and forest resources are central to the livelihoods, culture and traditions of forest communities. The livelihoods of communities depend heavily upon subsistence agriculture and non-timber forest products. Facing the encroachment and exclusive rights of economic land concessions that are leading to environmental degradation and destroying their means of livelihoods and endangering their future survival, communities have sought alternative ways to maintain their livelihood opportunities, and voiced their opposition to the presence and activities of concessionaires, and called for action to safeguard their sources of livelihoods.

Adam (2001) proposes that it is necessary for individual people and communities to lay claim to the prerequisites for sustainable livelihood. Beyond a certain point, sustainability is not something that can be administered from above; it has to be seized from below. The poor, in particular, need to become environmental activists, both against their own degradation of the environment on which they depend, and against the environmental impacts of development. He categorizes responses as three kinds: to environmental risk and degradation, and to the impacts of unwanted developments such as adaptation, resistance and protest.

The commercial plantation scheme has been considered a good contribution to the national economy, without realizing it in practices. Such practices often lead to the local livelihoods worsening. Therefore, in response to natural resource degradation and the difficulties of poverty, local communities may choose any kind of response as an alternative way to maintain their livelihood based on their life-world through avoiding confronting or provoking powerful actors.

### **2.3.1 Adaptation as a Strategy**

In the context of development that corners the rights to natural resources, the local people may come up with adaptation strategies to cope with difficulties in their lives. Livelihood adaptation can be a kind of diversification that can either refer to an increasing multiplicity of activities, or it can refer to a shift away from traditional rural sectors such as from agriculture to non-traditional activities in either rural or urban space. It also involves moving either the location of livelihood, or some other intrinsic economic quality (Start and Johnson, 2004).

The most basic response to environmental degradation or risk is for people to adapt their lives and systems of production to cope with it. The livelihoods of people in high-risk or highly variable environments tend to exhibit considerable flexibility. The organizing principles of adaptation prove useful when environmental or socio-economic change is endogenous 'from within local society', and driven by the development process. In the face of deforestation, peasant farmers respond to shrinking forest and land resources defensively, trying to maintain traditional systems of resource management, to intensify crop, livestock, and forest production, and by squeezing consumption (Adam 2001).

According to Bryant and Bailey (1997), a strategy of adaptation has been used frequently by powerless actors to respond to the political and economic marginality of these actors in such a way that it is often impossible for them to protest about the environmental degradation or physical exclusion that is disrupting their livelihood. Many grassroots actors nonetheless adopt strategies that aim to minimize any adverse effects while at the same time avoiding confrontation with powerful actors. Impoverished grassroots actors, therefore, adapt to enclosure or environmental degradation by extending the time spent pursuing livelihood needs. In this sense, these powerless actors hang on a heavier workload for daily food and consequently less time for income-generating activities.

Bryant and Bailey, (1997) mention the last choice of adaptation may be reflected in a decision to migrate away from an area altogether. The decision to move, principally for environment reasons, tends to indicate that the possibilities of adaptation through other means have already been exhausted. Environmental migrants often end up moving to urban areas or, in extreme cases, to neighboring countries, but the common theme is an inability to remain in the home territory due to severe environmental degradation or denied access to needs of environmental resources.

Diem, (2004) found that since the Vietnamese government strengthened the forest management program in 1998, the area of shifting cultivation has been reduced resulting in some of the families in the Makong community having to attempt to adapt to the situation by not only adopting new crops, but also by setting up domestic vegetable and cash crop gardens and raising more domestic animals.

Sovathana (2004) found that the Krola community relates their livelihood practices and tradition to specific ecological areas, as well as to the protection of biodiversity and sustainable socio-economic development. As upland communities were transformed in the 1990s with increasing influence by the market economy, land became a commodity. Additionally, community land was grabbed by outsiders for commercial purposes as most families have intensified the use of labor and resources. Due to market economy orientation, wealthier people have had more opportunity to increase their investment in cash-crop production, while poorer families have increased their income by undertaking wage labor within and outside the community in order to meet their basic needs.

In some cases, adaptation may be associated with a partial reversal in the marginalization of the poor grassroots actors as these actors take advantage of new economic opportunities generated by the capitalistic market. Hirsch (1990) notes that Thai farmers in Uthaitхани province diversified into upland cash crop cultivation in order to take the opportunity offered by the market.

Facing famine or food shortage, local people will seek any strategies to combat against the oppression of themselves from powerful groups, including government agencies and business groups who are grabbing their land and excluding them from natural resource use more seriously than the adaptation shown above. In this sense, the forms of local resistance, fighting against the oppression from powerful groups, and contestation for gaining rights of access to natural resources for their livelihood, emerged in different ways and contexts.

### **2.3.2 Resistance and Protest as Making a “Living Space”**

The transformation of rural economics by colonial and post colonial states has often involved direct state coercion of rural producers in the name of development. The state’s ability to ‘capture’ the peasantry politically and economically (or its failure to do so) has been widely discussed, (Williams, 1981, Crummey, 1986, Hyden, 1980 cited in Adam, 2001). Adam, (2001) points out that subordinate class resist impositions and demands made upon them (by state or richer neighbors) silently, subtly, passively, and without overt organization. He emphasizes that the subordinate classes meet their demands through what Scott, (1985) calls ‘everyday forms of peasant resistance’.

Bryant and Bailey, (1997) illustrate that everyday resistance is widely resorted to by poor farmers, shifting cultivators, and the like, when open confrontation with powerful actors carries the real prospect of a massive retaliatory response by the latter. They argue that the purpose and meaning of everyday resistance becomes clearer when this technique is contrasted with the better-known grassroots or ‘peasant’ rebellion. They claim that everyday resistance is the antithesis of the peasant rebellion. Whereas a peasant rebellion is overt and collective, everyday resistance is covert and often individual; while peasant rebellion directly challenges prevailing political and economic norms, everyday resistance does so indirectly and always on

the sly. In this sense, the peasant rebellion is much more similar to what Adam, (2001) calls 'Contest'. However, everyday strategies have long been the mainstay of efforts by poor grassroots people to fight and to enclose environmental degradation throughout the Third World (Colburn, 1989 cited in Bryant and Bailey, 1997).

Peluso (1992) notes that the successful policy of controlling the forest land and forest access excluded villagers from free access to the forest in Java, Indonesia. The potential autonomy of forest settlements and important subsistence options forced the poor to resist the foresters and the colonial forest policy in a variety of ways. She found that three general types of peasant resistance have occurred: first, long-term expressions of discontent such as migrations, action against plantations, increases in the crime rate, or messianic movements; second, explosions of sudden rebellion; and third, the existence and rise of special sects with different social and religious views of society.

She highlighted the Samin religion-based movement, which occurred when local people could not accept the imposition upon them. It meant that the people would have to pay for everything in nature that they use for everyday life. Those people believed that God creates nature for everyone. So the law and other kinds of punishment against the people for using those natural resources without permission were made by men—not by God. The actions of Saminists represented a primarily nonviolent reaction to the state's violations of prevailing peasant values; these values centered on access to the forest and agriculture, the preferred livelihood strategies.

Lohmann (1996) investigated Indonesia and Thailand in the context of a globalizing pulp and paper industry, and revealed that these countries are similar in their establishment of commercial pulpwood plantation in ways in which competition for available land and forest is in heavy resistance. Continuing pressure from the paper and pulp industry and its allies, however, has led to a battle between plantation promoters and local villagers and environmentalists. He notes that the local communities have met with difficulty in their livelihoods, and they oppose such spread of eucalyptus plantations by coming up with different forms of opposition, such as petitioning district officials, members of parliaments, and cabinet members; holding rallies; speaking out at national level seminars; blocking roads; and marching on government office property; and other means, including ripping out eucalyptus



seedlings, chopping down eucalyptus trees, stopping bulldozers, and burning nurseries and equipment (also see Lang, 2002).

Lang, (2002) reveals that the villagers in Ansa Chombok commune in Pursat province have protested to the government, in an attempt to prevent Pheapimex from destroying 6,800 hectares of forest near their village. In February 2001, villagers traveled to Phnom Penh to try to persuade the government to halt the planned plantation. In March, a meeting between government officials and villagers took place in Ansa Chombok commune. NGOs continue to work with villagers, for example in Pursat province, to create a forest protection society aimed at legally establishing villagers' rights to forests for gathering and other purposes.

## **2.4 Summary**

In this chapter, the theoretical basis was reviewed for this study. To understand social actors involved in natural resource utilization and management, in particular natural forest resources in Cambodia, three main concepts were reviewed, including (1) state power in natural resource management as enforcement, (2) local community participation in resource management, and (3) local response to monoculture as a livelihood strategy.

In Cambodia, the government expands its power to controls over and exploitation of natural resources to fulfill the demands of the “economic growth” and global market. The granting of economic land concessions can be seen as a form of mobilizing land and forestland in economic development in recent years. Rapid increase in investment in economic land concessions in the form of profit oriented industrial development is dynamically excluding and cornering the existing community rights. They are creating a lot of conflict and competition over natural resources between the actors involved in the degradation of natural resources and the environment.

Therefore, the concept of “state power in natural resource management as enforcement” was reviewed with focusing on; first, “the politics of forestland management” to illustrate the nation-state’s ability to exercise its exclusive power to control forestland; and second, “monoculture in politics of ‘sustainable’ development” to illustrate how agricultural plantations contribute to sustainable development under

the capitalist perspective, which is usually accepted by “modern” states, and how this perspective contradicts environmental activists who would argue that the application of ‘monoculture’ is not ‘sustainable’ development.

The concept of “local community participation in resource management” was also reviewed with attention paid to “participation in community development” and “decentralized natural resource management in practice” to understand development practice in Cambodia. With this concept review, the weakness of decentralization policy in forest management was seen in Cambodia. Since Cambodia adopted the development model “bottom-up approach” with financial and technical support from international donors, local communities have had an opportunity to participate in the development process. However, their participation was ignored somehow, especially in natural forest utilization and management whenever the government demands too much to use this resource for “economic growth” through privatization.

Following the above two concepts, the concept of “local response to monoculture as a livelihood strategy” was reviewed by elaborating on “adaptation as a strategy” and “protest and resistance as making a living space” to understand how grassroots people respond to the powerful actors when their lives are facing difficulties and how they adapt to large-scale development projects. The large-scale development projects such as agro-industry which demand to use thousands of hectares of land are often found in developing countries. Such projects always affected the local community’s livelihoods leading to recurring conflicts between actors involved.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **DEVELOPMENT AND LAND MANAGEMENT POLICIES**

#### **3.1 Geographical Setting of Cambodia**

The Kingdom of Cambodia, also known as Kampuchea or as Khmer is the third smallest, tropical country of the 10 Southeast Asian nations and is surrounded by Thailand and Lao in the west and north and Vietnam in the south and the east. It has a coastline on the Gulf of Thailand of 443 kilometers and its total land boundaries are 2,572 kilometers. Cambodia's main geographic features include the Mekong River, Tonle Sap Lake, extensive floodplain and lowland areas, and the southwestern and northeastern uplands. It is composed of twenty-three provinces and one capital city<sup>1</sup> and is divided into 185 districts, 1,621 communes and 13,406 villages with a total area of 181,035 square kilometers or 18.1 million hectares, including lakes and rivers. The capital city is Phnom Penh located at the meeting point of the Mekong River and the Tonle Sap River.

Physically, Cambodia is a vast, shallow bowl with the edge rising steeply to the north, the east and the south into wild, jungle-cloaked mountains and plateaus. Within such geography, Cambodia is characterized as a low-lying country that occupies the central plains of the lower Mekong valley and Tonle Sap Basin, but is bordered on three sides by the densely forested mountain ranges of the Ratanakiri Plateau in the east, the Cardamome Mountains in the west, and the Elephant Mountains in the southwest. These characteristics of nature are home to a variety of birds and animals, including tigers, wild cats, wild buffaloes, monkeys, elephants and rhinoceros, various kinds of snakes including the cobra, and the Siamese crocodile. Forests tend to be located around the periphery in the highland areas as opposed to the lowland areas which are dominated by paddy fields (Lopez et al, 2001; Tully, 2005). The Kingdom of Cambodia is in a key position to conserve the biological heritage of Southeast Asia.

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<sup>1</sup> Cambodia has 23 provinces: Battambang, Banteay Meanchey, Kandal, Kampot, Kompong Speu, Kompong Cham, Kompong Channang, Kompong Thom, Koh Kong, Kratie, Mondulkiri, Oddar Meanchey, Preah Vihear, Prey Veng, Pursat, Rattanakiri, Siem Reap, Svay Rieng, Stung Treng and Takeo, Kep, Kompong Soum.

However the thoughtless exploitation of natural resources has dramatically decreased Cambodia's biodiversity over the past few decades (Lopez et al, 2001).

### **3.2 Development Policies Overview**

Cambodia fundamentally changed its overall situation after having national reconciliation and a process of peace resulting from the Paris Accord on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September 1991. With assistance from the international community, the general national election was held in May 1993. This was an important event for Cambodia for changing the decadent society by war toward full peace, security, political stability and development. The 1993 election led to the adoption of the new Constitution, the establishment of the National Assembly and the formation of The Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC). Following these changes, Cambodia was committed to rehabilitate and develop the country by setting up several phases. The "Emergency Phase" of development strategy was set and implemented for the first three years (1993-1995) after the election and was followed by the "Rehabilitation and Development Phase" for 1996-2000 and then the "Sustainable Development Phase" from 2001 to date.

During this period of time, the government introduced several primary development strategies, national programs and state reforms such as:

- The National Program to Rehabilitate and Develop Cambodia (1994)
- The First Five-Year Socio-Economic Development Plan (1996-2000) focused on a rural development strategy based on a participatory bottom-up approach (Framework for Decentralization)
- Public Investment Program (Three year enrollment, 1998-2000)
- Triangle Strategy (1998-2003)
- The Second Five-Year Socio-Economic Development Plan (2001-2005) focused on long-term sustainable economic growth; equitable distribution of income at the national level, in both urban and rural areas and between gender and sustainable use of natural resources and environmental protection.
- National Poverty Reduction Strategy (2003-2005),
- Rectangular Strategy (2004-2008), and
- The National Strategic development Plan (2006-2010).

The National Strategic Development Plan 2006-2010 has been considered as the development strategy for pursuing prioritized goals and actions for the period from 2006-2010. The NSDP has been framed as the operationalization of the Rectangular Strategy, linking the vision in the Rectangular Strategy to concrete goals, targets and strategies. It synthesizes goals and targets contained in the Second Five-Year Socio-Economic Development Plan for 2001-2005, the National Poverty Reduction Strategy for 2003-2005 and the Cambodian Millennium Development Goals. The Rectangular Strategy for “Growth, Employment, Equity and Efficiency” was adopted by the Government in 2004 as the framework for the country's socio-economic development. Founded on good governance, peace, political stability, social order, macroeconomic stability, partnership and economic integration, the Rectangular Strategy focuses on critical development issues such as the enhancement of the agricultural sector, rehabilitation and construction of physical infrastructure, private sector development and employment generation, and capacity development and human resource development.

### *The Structure of the Rectangular Strategy (RS)*

The *Rectangular Strategy* is an integrated structure of interlocking rectangles, as follows:

**First**, the core of the *Rectangular Strategy* is **good governance** focused on four reform areas: (1) anti-corruption, (2) legal and judicial reform, (3) public administration reform including decentralization and deconcentration, and (4) reform of the armed forces, especially demobilization;

**Second**, the environment for the implementation of the *Rectangular Strategy* consists of four elements: (1) peace, political stability and social order; (2) partnership in development with all stakeholders, including the private sector, donor community and civil society; (3) favorable macroeconomic and financial environment; and (4) the integration of Cambodia into the region and the world.

**Third**, the four strategic “growth rectangles” are: (1) enhancement of the agricultural sector; (2) private sector growth and employment; (3) continued rehabilitation and construction of physical infrastructure; and (4) capacity building and human resource development.

**Fourth**, each strategic “growth rectangle” has four sides:

- **Rectangle 1: Enhancement of the Agricultural Sector** which covers: (1) improved productivity and diversification of agriculture; (2) **land reform and clearing of mines**; (3) **fisheries reform**; and (4) **forestry reform**

- *Rectangle 2: Continued Rehabilitation and Construction of Physical Infrastructure*, involving: (1) continued restoration and construction of transport infrastructure (inland, marine and air transport); (2) management of water resources and irrigation; (3) development of energy and power grids, and (4) development of Information and Communication Technology
- *Rectangle 3: Private Sector Growth and Employment* covers: (1) strengthened private sector and attraction of investments; (2) promotion of SMEs; (3) creation of jobs and ensuring improved working conditions; and (iv) establishment of social safety nets for civil servants, employees and workers
- *Rectangle 4: Capacity Building and Human Resource Development*, including: (1) enhanced quality of education; (2) improvement of health services; (3) fostering gender equity, and (4) population management

### **3.3 Changes in Political Regime and Land Tenure in Cambodia**

*It is hard to imagine what Cambodian people have gone through during the past 50 years. During this period their country went from monarchy to republic, from civil war to communist regime, from socialist republic to today's young democracy. Each change implied a new constitution, a redesign of the public administration, a new idea of development and ultimately of the idea of society. (Pellini, 2007:176).*

Through reviewing the development policies above, we can see that the Rectangular Strategy commits to enhancing the “Agricultural Sector” which covers: (1) improved productivity and diversification of agriculture; (2) land reform and clearing of mines; (3) fisheries reform; and (4) forestry reform. Therefore, land tenure is, in this session, reviewed to understand its change in the period of time (Table 3.1).

In Cambodia, land has been considered as the foundation of society and life for hundreds of years. It is not only land but other resources attached with the land that are also crucially important economic resources and assets to Cambodian people. However, land issues have been found in the country. The French colonial regime instituted some land administration and registration practices under a Cambodian Civil Code but these were never fully implemented. Between 1954 and 1975, the independent Cambodian government also made limited progress in formally registering property. Under the Khmer Rouge (1975-1979) land was collectivized, and all land records, including cadastral maps and titles, were destroyed. This effectively left the country without a land administration system. The right to own land was reinstated in 1989 and the first land law was enacted in 1992.

**Table 3.1 Land Tenure in Different Political Regimes**

<b>Political Regime</b>	<b>Started Date of Each Regime</b>	<b>Land Tenure</b>
French Colony (1863-1953)	Signing ‘Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and French Protection’ on 11 August 1863	Private Ownership started to introduce and practice
Kingdom of Cambodia (1953-70)	Gained Independence from France on 9 November 1853	Private Ownership continued
Khmer Republic (1970-1975)	Coup d’ etat by Gen. Lon Nol on 18 <sup>th</sup> March 1970	Private Ownership continued
Democratic Kampuchea (1975- 1979)	Victory by Armed Force of Pol Pot on Gen Lon Nol’s Government on 17 April 1975	No private property ownership (land belong to the State only)
People Republic of Kampuchea (1979- 1989)	Victory by Arm Force on Pol Pot Regime or Vietnamese invasion on 9 January 1979	Land was belonging to the State and Solidarity Groups (Krom Samaki)
State of Cambodia (1989-1993)	VN Troops withdrawn in 1989 following by Economic Reform	Private property rights reintroduced
Kingdom of Cambodia (1993- Present)	First general election in May 1993	Private property rights continued and strengthened

Cambodia has gone through dramatic political changes since the 1970s, and each new government has introduced its own system for the use and ownership of land – these changes have created both confusion and conflict. Therefore, in this section, political change that affected land tenure is reviewed based on historical records of secondary data to understand dynamics of land utilization in Cambodia. As ideological politics of Cambodia is often changed, the land property rights and land management is partially different from one regime to another. To easily understand historical change of land property and its issues, I would like to begin from the French colonial period to the current period by classifying the period of each ruling government.

### **3.3.1 French Protectorate (1863-1953): Colonial Period**

During the pre-colonial era of France (before 1864), land symbolically belonged to the country's ruling sovereign power. Meanwhile, the Cambodian population was small, about 946,000 people in 1874, and land market had not significantly emerged yet, and thus the people enjoyed clearing and cultivating land as much as they needed (Ross, 1987; Tully 2005; Guttal, 2006). The land cultivators could easily move from one area to another area, and the cultivation was seen as a form of ownership. After signing a 'Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and French Protection' on 11 August 1863, French *Résident* would have power in ruling the nation in terms of the king's advisor and the French could trade freely throughout the country (Tully, 2005). The French colonists then introduced the concept of private land ownership to replace the traditional land use system in Cambodia by firstly promulgating a Land Act in 1884, which attempted to impose taxes on the land under cultivation or through a system of concession (Leuprecht, 2004; Vitou et la, 2006).

The new concept of land ownership, which was enforced by the 1884 Land Act, was resisted by Cambodian Farmers to avoid paying more taxes as well as for cultural reasons. Hence, this land act could be only implemented in urban and more populated areas where land had begun to be registered. For rural people, the cultivation and acquisition of land continued as before issuance the land act, remarkably "by the plough". By 1930, most of the rice growing fields were registered as private property and people were free to sell their land. More importantly, all free areas or unoccupied land became available to those people who sold their land to move to the forests, because Cambodia was described at this time as being mainly covered by forest and its population was not big. By this time, patterns of land use were regulated by dividing it into plots and introducing land concessions for commercial plantations.

### **3.3.2 The First Kingdom of Cambodia (1953-1970): Independent Period**

The French colonial period lasted until 1953, when King Sihanouk led his 'royal crusade for independence', which saw the restoration of Cambodian sovereignty. Cambodia gained full independence on 9 November 1953 under leadership of King Norodom Sihanouk. In this period, Cambodia was formally named



the ‘Kingdom of Cambodia’. However, this regime is informally known as ‘Sangkum Reas Niyum’; the people, at my study site in particular, know this regime ‘Sangkum Dorb Bram Mauy’ which means the “16 years regime”, which refers to a 16-year (1954-1970) peaceful society of Cambodia led by the charismatic King Norodom Sihanouk.

After Cambodia gained full independence, the Western concept of private land ownership was continued to be practiced in the Kingdom. Two categories of land rights were practiced such as ‘Ownership rights’ and ‘Possession rights’. The ownership rights were exclusively managing rights on any property including land property. The possession rights could be obtained for agricultural land, and those lands could become the private land of the state if it was abandoned. The possession rights were divided into three categories: concession rights for Cambodian people only, use rights for cultivation and long-term land rental for foreigners (Vitou et al, 2006). By 1956, the government prohibited all foreigners from acquiring ownership of land through the concession system. French companies, however, continued to operate rubber plantations on state land.

Ross, who is a reviewer of the economy between 1953 and 1970, reveals that farmers began to cultivate more land, causing rice production to increase from an average of 1.4 million tons in 1955 to 2.4 million tons in 1960. Production remained at that level throughout the 1960s. By 1969 approximately 80 percent of rice farmers owned the land they cultivated, and the landholding for each family averaged slightly more than two hectares. Rice and rubber were, in this period, the country's two principal commodity exports (Ross, 1987). It is important to note that large-scale land concessions existed and have some impacts on the environment and on local populations (Leuprecht, 2004).

### **3.3.3 Khmer Republic (1970-1975): The US supported Government**

The first “Kingdom of Cambodia”, which was ruled by King Norodom Sihanouk, was renamed the “Khmer Republic” several months after the coup d’etat organized by Sihanouk’s army chief, General Lon Nol on the 18th of March 1970. A new constitution abolishing the monarchy was passed and Cambodia became a Republic State led by Gen. Lon Nol supported militarily, economically and politically

by the United States government (Ear, 1995; Nee, 2000). This period was described as eruption of a full-scale civil war in Cambodia. The heavy armed conflict occurred between the group of Khmer Rouge led by Pol Pot with support from China and North Vietnam, and the “Khmer Republic” government which led to the death or wounding of millions of people and to the destruction of the economic systems (Nee, 2000).

The war between Lon Nol’s forces and those of the rising Khmer Rouge guerrillas combined with the carpet bombing of northern Cambodia by the U.S. in 1973 and displaced large numbers of rural citizens (Ear, 1995). The intense combat caused a large segment of the peasant population to quit their land and to flee to cities and to towns. By 1975 the population of Phnom Penh had increased to 2 million, from just 50,000 in 1955 and 600,000 in 1970 (Ross, 1987; Ear 1995). During these years of civil conflict and war, from 1972 large areas of Cambodia gradually came under Khmer Rouge control, and the land management system changed drastically in these areas. Following the coup d’état in 1970, some wealthy Cambodians established small fruit plantations. By early 1975, the Khmer Rouge controlled much of the country, save for provincial towns and their surrounding areas. Moreover, the war seriously dislocated the economic system (Leuprecht, 2004).

#### **3.3.4 Democratic Kampuchea (1975-79): Killing Field Regime**

Again, Cambodia was ruled by General Lon Nol and the “Khmer Republic” was renamed as “Democratic Kampuchea” soon after Pol Pot took control the country in April 1975. Nee (2000) calls this era an extremely communist Maoist regime. He describes that all the community’s formal and traditional structures were destroyed. Culture and religious practices were prohibited. There was no money and no market. All schools, from primary to tertiary education, were closed. All of the urban population was forced to evacuate towns and live as farmers in rural communities. People were forced to work and eat communally. Judy L (1998) also reveals that during the Democratic Kampuchea (DK) period (1975-1979), all agricultural lands were collectivized and the population was organized by age and sex into work teams that labored long hours for agricultural production and the construction of a vast network of irrigation canals. As Ross describes:

*“The Khmer Rouge, in line with the slogan, "If we have dikes, we will have water; if we have water, we will have rice; if we have rice, we can have absolutely everything," organized the workers into three "forces." The first force comprised unmarried men (ages fifteen to forty) who were assigned to construct canals, dikes, and dams. The second force consisted of married men and women who were responsible for growing rice near villages. The third force was made up of people forty years of age and older who were assigned to less arduous tasks, such as weaving, basket-making, or watching over the children. Children under the age of fifteen grew vegetables or raised poultry. Everyone had to work between ten and twelve hours a day, and some worked even more, often under adverse, unhealthy conditions”.*

During the Democratic Kampuchea (Khmer Rouge) period, the land tenure and cadastral records were destroyed and private property was abolished. All land belonged to the State Organization. Ross, 1987 quoted an explanation of Khmer Rouge leader Premier Ieng Sary on Cambodia's economic revolution of such a regime; the explanation is that Cambodia wanted *"to create something that never was before in history. No model exists for what we are building. We are not imitating either the Chinese or the Vietnamese model"*. The state or cooperatives owned all land; there were no private plots of land in Cambodia. The constitution, adopted in December 1975 and proclaimed in January 1976, specifically stated that the means of production were the collective property of the state” (Ross, 1987).

### **3.3.5 The People Republic of Kampuchea (1979-1989): Socialist Regime**

In 1979 Cambodia was again renamed as “The People Republic of Kampuchea (PRK)” after Vietnamese troop’s invasion of Cambodia at the end of 1978 (Tith, 1998). However, the war was continued between a Vietnamese-supported government and the resistance government which was a combination of Khmer Rouge and two other non-communist factions, Khmer People’s National Liberation Front (KPNLF) and Front Unite National Pour un Cambodge Independent, Neutre, Pacifique et Cooperatif (FUNCINPEC) (Nee, 2000). In this period, Cambodia was practically cut off from the world’s market economies, because the new government

adopted a centrally planned economic system with the assistance of the Eastern bloc or the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA).

The PRK first attempted to implement a modified form of collectivized agriculture based on administrative and political units of the people's revolutionary committee known as "Krom Samaki" or "Sodality Group". All land officially belonging to the State and Solidarity Groups (Krom Samaki) was established with which land was occupied and used for agricultural and residential purposes. Land was redistributed to Krom Samaki based on the labor and availability of land in each area. The collectives consisted of 10 to 15 families in which they shared each other's land, labor and draft animals (Vitou et al, 2006). They found that during that period people could occasionally transfer some residential land unofficially based on mutual agreement even though all land belonged to the state.

However, after unpopularity and discontinuation of the Krom Samaki, the fifth party congress of PRK in 1986 formally recognized the private sector in economic development. Later, restoration of private use (but not ownership) of land to boost agricultural production was practiced (Tith, 1998; Tudy L, 1998). According to Leuprecht (2004), during the years of reconstruction that followed the Vietnamese invasion at the beginning of 1979, all land was declared as state property. Private use of state land was permitted through the allocation of plots to each family. He also mentions that rubber plantations came under direct state control through the Department General of Rubber Plantations, and large-scale logging took place between 1979 and 1989 to finance continuing war and to secure territory.

### **3.3.6 State of Cambodia (1989-1993): Transitional Period**

Following the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Cambodia in 1989, the PRK again renamed itself as the "State of Cambodia" (SOC). The departure of Vietnamese troops left Cambodia facing uncertainty of the economic and political situation. However, Cambodia began to turn a side to a market economy (Doyle, 1998). The major economic reform was implemented, and the government reintroduced private property rights in 1989. Constitutional amendments in 1989 marked the start of a private property system, with Article 15 providing that "Cambodian citizens shall enjoy fully the right to own, use, bequeath and inherit land

granted by the state for the purpose of living on it and exploiting it"(Leuprecht, 2004). In addition, instruction No. 3 on the principles of possession and use of land, which was enforced on 03 June 1989 by the Council of Ministers of the SOC, invalidated ownership rights enforced before 1975, but revived the concept of private rights, including land concession rights.

The instruction No. 3 established three categories of land: Firstly, land for domiciles to be provided for ownership (kamaset) by the provincial committee or municipality with a size up to 2000 m<sup>2</sup>; secondly, possession land: State land allocated to farmers to manage (krupkrong) and for use (praeprass) for exploitation with a size up to 5 ha and; thirdly, concession land (deysampatein) greater than 5 ha. which provided the rights to occupy land (kankap) for large-scale crop production that would contribute to the national economy.

On the basis of instruction No. 3 and sub-degree No. 25 on Granting Ownership Rights over Houses to the People of the State of Cambodia, land was distributed to households. Residential land and productive land were redistributed to people to own and occupy. **The remaining land was kept as state private property for future development** (Vitou et al 2006). In the land redistribution, farmers were allocated between 0.1 and 0.2 hectares per family member which meant that land holding ranging from 0.5 to 2 hectares per household (Tudy 1998). As a critical example; my household in Svay Teab Commune, Cham Karleur District, Campong Cham Province was allocated agricultural land of 0.1 hectares per member; thus my household received 1.2 hectares of agricultural land for 12 members in the household. The land has been used and possessed since that time.

The land law, which was enacted on 10 August 1992, maintained the situation of possession rights for agricultural and residential land, while the state continued to be the legal owner. The land law created ownership rights for residential property and divided state land into two types of state property: 1) state public property and 2) state private property. It presses that only the state private land can be granted for concessions. With the enactment of the 1992 Land Law, people were able to apply for land certificates that confirmed occupancy and use rights, although the law allowed only possession rights rather than ownership in rural areas. According to the Department of Cadastre and Geography, not more than 14 percent of the estimated 4.5

million applicants have received formal certificates of ownership since the early 1990s (Sopha et al, 2001).

Leuprecht, 2004 argues that although the 1992 Land Law extended private property rights, the majority of people did not receive any formal allocation of land or certificates of title. Despite several attempts to regulate land between 1884 and 1989, land registration and titling were never successfully implemented. Fluidity in land use permitted traditional methods of land holding to continue and the majority of farmers had locally recognized land rights even if not holding title papers. Among other difficulties, the cadastral system has been ill-equipped and under-resourced to manage even modest workloads. In some parts of the country, security was also a significant factor, as fighting between the Khmer Rouge insurgents and government forces continued up until 1998. Government offices at the district and commune level, as well as village chiefs, were sometimes attacked, and in some cases cadastral records were once again destroyed (Ballard, 2006).

### **3.3.7 The Second Kingdom of Cambodia (1993-present)**

After Cambodian warring factions signed the Paris Peace Accord in October 1991, the United Nation Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) was established as an international organization for monitoring the peace process in Cambodia. Furthermore, the UNTAC was responsible for preparing a general election for a new Cambodian government. By May 1993, a general election was held, and a new Cambodian government was formed, named the “Kingdom of Cambodia” with the motto “Nation, Religion, King”. The Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia, adopted soon after the 1993 election, marked a shift to a market economy. It provided for "legal private ownership" and for state property, with article 58 providing for the "control, use and management" of state property to be protected by law.

#### *Article 58:*

- *State property notably comprises land, mineral resources, mountains, sea, underwater, continental shelf, coastline, airspace, islands, rivers, canals, streams, lakes, forests, natural resources, economic and cultural centers, bases for national defense and other facilities determined as state property.*
- *The control, use and management of State properties shall be determined by law.*

Upon the 1993 election, the RCG introduced a number of private investment incentives through an economic reform agenda to promote economic and social development. Agricultural development was claimed as a priority with the aim of ensuring food security, providing raw materials for industry, increasing exports and creating employment. To reach this aim, the RCG produced a new land law, which was enacted in August 2001, to replace the 1992 land law in order to effectively manage land property in the Kingdom. The new land law provides a way of granting social and economic land concessions on land and forestlands to both local and international investors.

However, Leuprecht, 2004 reveals that the rationale for granting forests and other state lands to private companies for exploitation was to stimulate private enterprise, contribute to state revenue and reduce poverty in rural areas. Attracted by promises of fast incomes, many companies approached Cambodian officials at the local and national levels to obtain forestry and land concessions, with demand quickly exceeding supply. These concessions were outside existing laws and served to dispossess rural communities from farm and forest lands.

### **3.4 Land Management and Utilization for Economic Development**

#### **3.4.1 Structure and organization For Land Management**

Cambodian government structures are composed of central or national level, and municipal/provincial level. Below the municipal/provincial level, the divisions are district, commune and village level. The national government is represented by the Council of Ministers, which is chaired by the Prime Minister, and the council's composition mainly consists of Deputy Prime Minister, Senior Minister, Minister, Secretary of State and Under Secretary of State. At the national level, there are 28 ministries and state secretariats. At the provincial level, the authority of each municipality/province is led by a Mayor or Provincial Governor respectively.

Focusing on land management, there are some key governmental organizations involved along with the assistance of the governments of Finland, Germany and France who joined hands with the Government of Cambodia in order to improve the land administration situation beginning in 1995. The cooperation has continued until today with Finland and Germany. More recently, other donors

including the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and Canada have provided assistance in various land matters (Ballard, 2006).

With financial and technical support from the above supporters, the Council for Land Policy (CLP) was established in December 2000 with a mandate to develop a comprehensive land policy framework and to implement land legislations. The CLP is an intergovernmental body that includes key stakeholders concerned with land policy and management and it was created in order to coordinate policy-making and strengthen and coordinate the design, implementation and monitoring of land management policy in Cambodia (CLP, 2002). It implements its duty with support from its Secretariat located in the Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction.

The Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction (MLMUPC) was set up on 30 November 1998 and consists of a network of Provincial Departments of Land Management throughout the country, and is primarily responsible for land management and explicitly responsible for cadastral affairs. These responsibilities include the development of land policy, land registration and improving the management of state land, which involves oversight of the granting of social concessions, which are in turn carried out at the provincial level through the provincial Departments of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction.

Land management also involves a number of other key governmental institutions including:

- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) was established on 02 October 1984. The Ministry consists of a network of Provincial Departments of Agriculture throughout the country and is primarily responsible for agricultural development, which includes oversight of economic land concessions;
- The Ministry of Environment (MoE) was established in 1993. The ministry consists of a network of Provincial Departments of Environment throughout the country and is responsible for managing and protecting environmentally sensitive areas such as national parks and
- The military controls large areas of land in military development zones. For security reasons, the military was given rights to control parts of the forest and



other lands since 1994. After the restoration of peace in 1997, the military continued to hold on to an unspecified area of land, part of which has been given out for concessions.

### **3.4.2 Land Classification by Law**

By the late 1980s, Cambodia shifted its economic policy from a central planning economy to free market-oriented one. Land was seen as an important asset for economic development. In this economic scheme, the land law which has powerful tools for land management was developed two times. Two years after economic policy reform, the first land law was created in 1992 to economically manage and regulate land property nationwide. Almost ten years later, a new land law was enacted by the National Assembly of Cambodia in August 2001 in order to respond to the promulgation of the 1993 constitution and to create more trust for land investors. The new Land Law aims to regulate a number of hitherto unregulated areas such as leases, land concessions, indigenous community property, co-ownership, cadastral surveys, land title registers and certificates and dispute resolution.

The 2001 Land Law provides legal protection to establish the security of land tenure. It provides a fundamental basis for the reduction of land disputes, and facilitates land management by clarifying the ownership regime for land, and it importantly creates protection for state property. The law sets out a comprehensive system of land classification and land ownership rights. It creates three types of property classification in the Kingdom: State Public Property, State Private Property and Private Property. The classification makes a fundamental distinction between state public property, such as forests and protected areas, where the state seeks to conserve the resources, and state private property, where land is provided for economic and social development.

- **State Public Property:** Article 15 of the 2001 Land Law states that “State Public Property” is land held by the state in public trust, which carries public interest use. State Public Property includes the following:
  - Properties of a natural origin, such as forests, courses of navigable or floatable waterways, natural lakes, seashores, etc.
  - Properties that are developed for general use, such as quays of harbors,

- railways, railway stations and airports, etc.
- Property made available for public use, such as roads, tracks, oxcart ways, pathways, gardens and public parks, natural reserves, etc.
- Property that provides a public service, such as public schools or educational institutions, administrative buildings and all public hospitals.
- Properties of archeological, cultural and historical significance, such as the temple at Angkor complex.
- Immovable properties being royal properties that are not the private properties of the royal family. The reigning King manages royal immovable properties.

Article 16 of the law provide a note of importance that State Public Property may not be sold or transferred to other legal entities, though it may be subject to rights of occupancy or use that are strictly temporary in nature, such as a logging concession in the permanent forest reserve. The law also mentions that State Public Property may be reclassified as State Private Property if the properties lose their public interest use; they can be listed as private properties of the State by law on transferring of state public property to state private property. For example: the land and buildings that are occupied by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery are State Public Property. If the government moved the location of the MAFF and this property become vacant, then it would lose its public interest use and could be reclassified as State Private Property through a law on transferring of State Public Property to State Private Property.

- **State Private Property:** Article 17 of this law states that “State Private Property” is land which is owned by the state or public legal entities that does not have a public interest use. State Private Property can be described as excess or idle land that is held by the state or a public legal entity. The main difference between State Private Property and State Public Property is that State Private Property may actually be sold or transferred to other legal entities, such as land concessions, whether for a social or an economic purpose, may only occur on State Private Property.

- **Private Property:** Article 10 and Title IV on the forms of ownership of this law identifies Private Property that the property within the Kingdom that is owned by natural person or legal entities other than public legal entities. Private Property may be used by owner or owners in any way, as long as the use does not create a nuisance or is otherwise prohibited by law. Private Property, in very general terms, may be leased, used as collateral, inherited, or transferred to other individuals or legal entities. The ownership of private property takes various forms based on the number of people or legal entities that own the property and the rights of use that they have, such as individual ownership, collective ownership, undivided ownership, co-ownership and joint ownership.

### **3.4.3 Land Concessions for Economic Purpose**

The Land Law, promulgated on 30 August 2001, does not only clarify the ownership regime for land, but also authorizes the grant of land concessions responding to either social or economic purposes. The Land Law also provides a platform for “other kinds of concessions”, including mining, fishing, industrial development and port concessions. In this section, I would then like to look back to the French Colonial period to see how the concept of “land concession” emerged and developed during this period of time.

Based on a report on “Land Concessions for Economic Purposes in Cambodia: A Human Rights Perspective”, written by Peter Leuprecht<sup>2</sup> in 2004, the land concession system has emerged since the French protectorate. In the colonial period, provision of land concessions was mainly for the purpose of imposing tax on land use. A request on land concession could be approved at which point taxes were payable. A land concession was often granted on forestland, and it could be cancelled if it was not used, but the concessionaires could claim ownership over the lands if they could use them up to five years. By 1930, most of those concessions were not more than five hectares. However, persons or entities could be granted land concessions larger

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<sup>2</sup> Peter Leuprecht is a Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Human Rights in Cambodia. During his mission to Cambodia in 2003, he reviewed economic land concession in Cambodia and released the report in 2004. The history of concession system part of the report was based on old recorded document, mostly written in French.

than 500 hectares if they could prove financial means to manage such a larger area. Land concessions were continued in the independence government, and generally those lands were used for rubber plantations.

The French concept of land concession was almost absent when Cambodia fell into civil war for more than two decades (1970s-1980s). This concept was reintroduced when Cambodia finished the civil war and stepped toward a market oriented economy in the early 1990s. In an effort to practice the free market basis of economy, the concept of concession has been applied to all kinds of natural resources such as fishery, forestry and land, in the favor of economic development.

Presently, concessions on land, forestry, fishery and other natural resources are popular, and those can be seen everywhere in Cambodia. It would be said that in the fishery sector, we can easily see that anywhere that has water and fishery resources, often fishing concessions or fishing lots exist; in the forestry sector, anywhere that has valuable forests, often has forest concessions; and in the agricultural sector, anywhere that has available land, has land concessions. Fishing concessions, forest concessions, and land concessions are kinds of privatization of natural resources with an expectation of tax collection for the state's revenue.

When the concept of concession was revitalized in the late 1980s, fishery concessions, forestry concessions and land concessions were quickly in place, promising to contribute to state revenue and reduce poverty. However, those concessions were described by the special representative of the secretary-general for human rights in Cambodia, Peter Leuprecht as being associated with political elites or powerful government officials. He reveals that many private companies approached Cambodian officials at the local and national level to obtain forestry and land concessions. He added that that process took place outside the law. Similarly, Chris Land (2002) pointed out that the granting of concessions to businesses for large-scale agricultural plantations, often involves abuse of administrative or military power.

By 2000, fishery concessions covered 953,740 hectares and forestry concessions covered 6.5 million hectares (McKenney and Tola, 2002). These concessions were reduced or cancelled due to conflicts amongst actors involved at the ground and complaints of the international community about corruption and impacts of those concessions on social and ecological values. However, economic land

concessions have been continuously increased since the early 1990s until today even though some land concessions were cancelled.

Since 2001 land law has become a good tool to protect “state property” and to secure land tenure, many economic land concessions continuously occur nationwide. By 2007, at least 66 land concession companies were operating in the Kingdom, covering over one million hectares of land. This does not include 30 land concessions covering 265,230 hectares which were cancelled due to not following the contracts (MAFF, 2007). The number of land concessions has reportedly increased in 2008 and may continue to increase in the future.

### **3.5 Institutional Mechanism for Economic Land Concession**

#### **3.5.1 Determination of economic land concessions in the 2001 Land Law**

Chapter 5 of the 2001 Land Law, containing 14 articles (Art. 48-62), states about the “land concessions” grant in the Kingdom. The law asserts that a land concession is a legal right established by a legal document issued under the competent authority, given to any natural person or legal entity or group of persons to occupy land and to exercise thereon the rights. The land concession must be registered with the Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction.

Land concessions can be granted for social or economic purposes. The land concessions for economic purposes are lawfully called an “Economic Land Concession” of which the beneficiaries would be permitted to clear land for industrial agricultural exploitation with a specific period of time and pay. While, the concessions which respond to a social purpose, are lawfully called a “Social Land Concession”. This kind of land concession is gratuitously granted to allow beneficiaries (poor families) to build residential structures and/or to cultivate land for their subsistence. Both social and economic land concessions can only be granted on “State Private Land”. Besides land concessions for social and economic purposes, there are other kinds of concessions such as mining, port, fishery, industrial development and airport concessions.

Economic land concessions may only create rights for the term fixed by the concession contract. It cannot establish ownership rights on the land provided for concession. The rights of a concessionaire on conceded land, during the period of the

concession are the rights attributed to an owner, save for the right to alienate. The concessionaire is entitled, in particular, to the protection of his/her rights by the competent authorities. A concessionaire may defend the land which s/he has been given in concession, against encroachment or infringement, irrespective of its forms. Conceded land cannot be transferred through alienation. A transfer of conceded land can only result from the creation by the competent authorities of a new concession contract for the benefit of the new concession titleholder. In the case of the death of a concessionaire, his successors may continue, if they so wish, to exercise his rights during the remaining period of the concession.

Economic land concession areas shall not be more than 10,000 hectares for a maximum duration of ninety-nine years. Existing concessions which exceed such limit of land area shall be reduced. However, if such reduction would result in compromising the exploitation in progress, a concessionaire may obtain a specific exemption. The procedures for reductions and specific exemptions shall be determined by sub-decree. A specific person or several legal entities controlled by the same natural persons is prohibited to obtain economic land concession titles on several places relating to surface areas that are greater than 10,000 hectares. The land concessions are not allowed to violate roadways or transportation ways or sidewalks or their borders and the ground necessary for their maintenance, nor to waterways, pools, ponds and water reserves to be used by the people in their daily lives.

Economic land concession must be exploited within twelve months after issuance of the concession. If this is not complied with, the concession will be considered as cancelled. Any failure to exploit longer than 12 months, without proper justification, shall be grounds for cancellation of the concession. All land concessions granted before this law has come into force that are not exploited within 12 months after this law comes into force shall be cancelled. Any failure by a concessionaire to fulfill the conditions attached to the concession charges book shall be grounds to withdraw the concession. In the case of withdrawal of a concession, for whatever reason, the concessionaire is not entitled to claim any compensation for any damage. A land concession is revocable through governmental decision when its legal requirements are not complied with. The concessionaire is entitled to appeal these decisions in compliance with the procedures provided by law. A court may cancel the

concession if the concessionaire does not comply with specific clauses specified in the contract.

### **3.5.2 Sub-Decree on Economic Land Concessions**

The Sub-Decree on Economic Land Concessions, signed by the Prime Minister on 27 December 2005, determines the criteria, procedures, mechanisms and institutional arrangements for granting economic land concessions; monitoring the performance of economic land concession contracts; and reviewing the compliance with the Land Law of concessions granted prior to the effective date of the sub-decree. Economic land concessions are defined as a mechanism to grant state private land for agricultural and industrial-agricultural exploitation. The purposes for which they may be granted include investment in agriculture, rural employment and diversification of livelihood opportunities, and the generation of state revenues.

An economic land concession may only be granted when all the following criteria have been met:

- The land has been registered and classified as state private land, in accordance with the Sub-Decree on State Land Management and Sub-Decree on Procedures for Establishing Cadastral Maps and Land Register, or Sub-Decree on Sporadic Registration
- A land use plan for the land has been adopted by the provincial or municipal state land management committee, and the land use is consistent with the plan
- Environmental and social impact assessments have been completed with respect to the land use and development plan
- There are solutions for resettlement issues, in accordance with the existing legal framework and procedures. There shall be no involuntary resettlement by lawful land holders and access to private land shall be respected
- Public consultations have been conducted with territorial authorities and local residents, relating to economic land concessions projects or proposals. Proposals for economic land concessions are to be evaluated against criteria that include the promotion of people's living standards, perpetual environmental protection and natural resource management, avoidance or minimization of adverse social impacts, creation of increased employment,

and linkages and mutual support between social land concessions and economic land concessions.

The granting of economic land concessions may be initiated through solicited proposals, where the government seeks expressions of interest in a project, or unsolicited proposals, where an investor proposes a project. However, competitive solicited proposals are the prioritized method for granting concessions, and unsolicited proposals may only be considered in exceptional cases where an investor promises to provide outstanding advantages through the introduction of new technology, linkages between social land concessions and economic land concessions, or access to processing or export markets. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries is authorized to grant economic land concessions that exceed 1,000 hectares or a total investment value of 10,000,000,000 Riels (approximately \$2,500,000). For provincial and municipal governors are authorized to grant concessions below these limits. The responsibilities of contracting authorities include enforcing concession contracts, monitoring contract performance, and reporting to the Council of Ministers every six months.

### **3.6 Economic Land Concessions in Cambodia: An Overview**

Since the situation of the national economy of Cambodia was transferred from a planning to a free market basis in the early 1990s, natural resources have become a priority to be controlled and exploited for fulfilling the state revenue. The Royal Government of Cambodia has opened the door for both local and international investments on natural resources including the mining, fishery, forestry, and agriculture sectors. In the agricultural sector, the Government of Cambodia focuses on increasing development through the intensification and diversification of production beyond subsistence farming and by encouraging agro-industrial plantations and processing. The major goal of this opening is to develop agricultural and agro-industrial plantations, and processing for supporting international markets through granting “State Private Land”, which has been asserted claim that “degraded” forest areas and “free” land or non-used land to both local and international investors, in the name of economic land concessions. With this ambiguous goal, the government



expects those private companies will create job opportunities and generate income for the people living in the rural area.

Remarkably, many economic land concessions currently exist in Cambodia. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery (MAFF) reported that from 1993 to 2007 there are 96 companies in total that have been granted land concessions with the total area of around 1,272,007 hectares located in 16 provinces. Amongst those companies, 16 companies with concession area totals of 123,680 hectares were cancelled in the year 2000, and 14 companies with concessions totaling an area of 141,850 hectares were cancelled between the year of 2004 and 2006. Therefore, 66 economic land concessions will remain covering an area of 1,006,777 hectares (Table 3.2).

**Table 3.2 the Conceded Economic Land Concessions from 1993 to 2007**

Land Concession Status	Year	No. of Companies	Land Area (h)
Concessions Conceded	1993-2007	96	1,272,007
Concessions Cancelled	2000	16	123,680
	2004-2006	14	141,550
Remaining Concessions	2007	66	1,006,777

Source: *Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery, Annual Conference 2007*

Amongst 66 companies, which are operating in the Kingdom; 57 companies have reportedly signed contracts with total concession areas of 943,069 hectares, and 9 companies have agreed in principle for investment of the government, but the contracts are not signed yet, with the total concession land areas of 63,208 hectares (See in Table 3.3 and Table 3.4). There also appears to be an increasing demand for such concessions, not exceeding 1,000 hectares, which may be granted at the provincial level. For instance, in Kratie, information from provincial authorities indicates that 34 proposals for economic land concessions are under consideration, including 22 proposals for concessions of 1,000 hectares or less. In Monduliri, 23 proposals for economic land concessions were reported to be under consideration, covering over 100,000 hectares and including 11 proposals for 1,000 hectare concessions (Commissioner for Human right's report, 2007).

Those areas of conceded land have been claimed as “state property”, and asserted as “degraded” forest area and “free” land (non-used land) by the government, but the situation is different in reality. According to Kirkpatrick (2005) the economic land concessions and forestry concessions in Cambodia cannot be clearly differentiated. He illustrates that most of those granted land concessions were leased for tree plantations including rubber, teak or palm, and designated as agricultural plantations. However, he found that these conceded lands for agro-industrial plantations are located in forested areas. This sense perhaps fits to what McKenney and Tola (2002) suggest, that since the government tightening of forestry concessions, agricultural concessions may act as “loophole” for continuing forest exploitation.

**Table 3.3 the 57 land concessions with the contracts signed by MAFF**

No.	Province	No. of Concessions	Area (ha)
1	Stung Treng	10	179,899
2	Kompong Speu	8	90,256
3	Kratie	7	64,373
4	Ratanakiri	5	53,747
5	Kampong Cham	5	12,070
5	Kompong Thom	4	35,561
6	Koh Kong	3	79,300
7	Kampot	3	36,200
8	Siem Reap	3	19,235
9	Mondulkiri	2	17,600
10	Oddar Meanchey	2	16,000
11	Sihanoukville	2	12,800
12	Battambang	1	8,000
14	Pursat	1	138,963
15	Kampong Cham	1	176,065
<b>Sub Total</b>		<b>57</b>	<b>943,069</b>

*Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery, Annual Conference 2007*

**Table 3.4 the 9 land concessions with permission, but not yet signed contacts**

No.	Province	No. of Concessions	Area (h)
1	Kampong Cham	1	5,000
2	Ratanakiri	2	9,000
3	Mondulkiri	1	19,900
4	Kampong Speu	2	14,740
5	Siem Reap	1	1,351
7	Koh Kong	1	5,525
8	Preah Vihear	1	8,692
<b>Sub Total</b>		<b>9</b>	<b>64,208</b>

*Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery, Annual Conference 2007*

It would make sense to highlight that the Cambodian forests were heavily destroyed during the 1990s under the forestry concession label. Over six million hectares of forestland fell into forest concessions as a part of Cambodia's internationally supported reconstruction efforts. With these concessions, the government expected to receive royalties from the valuable timber export. In fact, during that time, illegal and unsustainable logging was rampant in Cambodia, because of corruption, lack of consideration for social and ecological impacts and contract violation. Many of those forestry concessions were canceled because they raised concern of the international community, especially international donors, and became a local political debate on the Cambodian logging industry.

The cancellation of some forestry concessions led the government to begin to make a reformation in the forestry sector. Since then, the forestry concessions are now supposedly subject to a more transparent and competitive bidding process. This process leads to note that forestry concessions seemed of no more interest to investors. Instead, agricultural concessions have become popular for both local and international investors because the concessions are not based on a bidding procedure, but instead just go through a negotiation with responsible officials of the government and then make a contract. In the forestry sector, even though statistics of forestry concessions decrease or suppose to be able controlled; illegal logging is still remarkably active in some provinces including Kratie, Steung Treng, Ratanakiri, Mondulkiri, Pursat, etc.

### **3.7 Decentralization Application in Rural Development**

As mentioned earlier, since Cambodia fully gained peace and adopted a democratic ideology and free market economy, it set many development policies in order to rehabilitate and develop the country. Amongst others, decentralization policy was adopted to bring power down to the local community in rural development processes to reduce poverty through participatory approach. The RGC's First Five-Year Socio-Economic Development Plan (SEDPI), provides a general framework for a decentralized and participatory approach to rural development. This shows that the government began to change the development paradigm from a central approach to a bottom-up approach which had never happened in Cambodian history. The initiation and promotion of decentralization policy of this post-war government have been prominent through various programs on the national scale and supported by the international donor community.

The most important, the Seila program, especially the Natural Resource and Environmental Management Project, aims at achieving sustainable livelihoods of communities through participatory planning and management of natural resources. It therefore supports the RGC in the implementation of decentralized development planning, financing and management in communes, as a part of the governance reforms. According to the current decentralization policies and efforts of the RGC, Commune Councils are playing a vital role in general, and have important duties for participatory natural resource and environmental management, including planning, implementation and monitoring.

The decentralization promotion in the mid-1990s stepped forward to the first commune election in 2002, a historical Cambodian event of accepting a development model from below. This election created 1,621 Commune Councils (CC), each with between 5-11 councilors, depending on the demographic and geographic situations of the individual communes, all of them elected party representatives with a five-year mandate. The 2002 CC term ended in March 2007 and the second national CC election took place in April 2007. Theoretically, the government is creating spaces for participation of people and has involved stakeholders in the development processes.

### **3.7.1 Progression of Implementing Decentralization**

After the 1993 general election, high levels of International Development Assistance were programmed for Cambodia, arriving at a time when the government was preoccupied with nation building and the centralization of state authority. Based on pilot projects that focus on governance, participation and new systems for planning, financing and implementation of local development, which were begun in 1994 by UNDP Cambodia Reintegration and Rehabilitation (CARERE); the Seila Program was launched by the Royal Government in 1996. The program was run to alleviate poverty in rural area through the design, implementation and strengthening of decentralized systems for planning, financing and implementation of local development at the provincial and communal levels. By 2003, the government appointed committees at three levels of the government's structure including national, provincial and district and including elected members at the commune level to continually run the Seila program. By that time, all 24 provinces/municipalities and all elected 1,621 Commune/Sangkat Councils of Cambodia had been covered.

Before the 2002 commune election, considerable emphasis was placed on the "village level" and the election of Village Development Committees (VDCs). These VDCs were different in nature to the previous political/administrative, top-down appointed village leadership. Special attention was taken to ensuring the inclusion of women as well as men through a quota system providing 40 percent representation for women on the VDCs. The VDCs ensured that prioritization of needs through planning began at the lowest level and submitted proposed action plans to the commune level where commune-wide prioritization took place through interaction between villages.

Immediately following the 2002 commune election, the village has become an essential unit of the commune and the roles of the VDC and Village Chief have yet to be clearly defined. Under the Commune/Sangkat Council, a Planning and Budgeting Committee (PBC) has been established consisting of a mix of Commune Counselors and a man and woman representative from each village drawn from VDCs where they exist and Village Chiefs. The PBC assists the Commune Council to prepare the plan and budget ensuring participation within the process and accountability of the elected Commune/Sangkat Council to the electorate.

- **At the commune level Commune:** Commune Development Committees (CDCs) were initially formed with one man and one woman representing each VDC, and chaired by the appointed Commune Chief. Since the commune elections in February 2002 the CDCs have been dissolved and their role largely subsumed in the newly created PBC. As the lowest tier of governance, planning and budgeting, the elected Commune/Sangkat Councils discuss and rank priority interventions to develop the commune through the formulation of a five-year commune development plan and a three-year rolling commune investment plan.

Priorities in the investment plans of all communes within a district are then aggregated analyzed and discussed at annual district integration workshops attended by all sub-national government departments, international agencies and NGOs. Through this approach the “supply” of services and investments is increasingly programmed to support the “demand” formulated at the local level. Following the results at the workshops, both the communes and the departments/agencies make final decisions on the use of their budgetary resources and finalize their individual provincial and commune plans.

- **At the district level:** District is now the lowest administrative level within the state and the strategic level for service delivery, District Development Committees (DDCs) were initially established but continue to lack clarity in the absence of an organic law defining the role of the district. The district is not a level of budgeting and planning in Cambodia and all district government staff are outpost from provincial departments. While the districts now play a role in facilitating district integration workshops, their service delivery functions are largely defined vertically by line ministries.

- **At the provincial level:** Provincial Rural Development Committees (PRDCs) were established under the Chairmanship of the Governor with all directors of provincial line departments, representatives of the military and police and all District Chiefs as members. The PRDCs represent a forum for discussing and reaching consensus on provincial plans for the use of those budgets assigned to the province as a territory (i.e. not all line ministry budgets).

To execute and monitor the implementation of plans, budgets and decisions made by the PRDC, an Executive Committee (ExCom) has been established under the Chairmanship of the Governor to carry out functions associated with execution (financial management, contract administration and monitoring, technical services and local capacity building support to the communes). All activities under the annual provincial work plan and budget are carried out by line departments and the private sector through contracts signed with the governor. The PRDC and its ExCom have strengthened the identity of the province as a territory to be administered and developed through horizontal interaction while at the same time respecting national policies, strategies and budgets assigned vertically.

- **At the national level:** The inter-ministerial Seila Task Force (STF) was initially established to provide policy guidance, coordination, oversight and authority during the first, five year experimental stage. With the adoption of legislation and the election of Commune/Sangkat Councils, a National Committee for Support to the Communes (NCSC) was established in 2001 to oversee policy and the formulation of the decentralized regulatory framework for the communes.

In its responsibilities, the STF oversees the framework for aid mobilization and coordination in support to the reforms, which includes considerable technical and financial support to the NCSC and its member ministries, nearly all of whom are simultaneously members of the STF. Under the chairmanship of the Minister of Economy and Finance, the STF originally consisted of senior representation from the Ministries of Interior, Planning, Rural Development, Women's Affairs and Agriculture. As the program developed and interest broadened, senior representatives from the Ministries of Water Resources and Social Action as well as the Council for Administrative Reform were added.

To support the execution of STF decisions and donor agreements signed under the Seila framework, a STF Secretariat was established to coordinate the programming, financial management, monitoring and reporting of resources programmed annually to 10 Ministries, 24 provinces and 1,621 communes. A Seila Donor Forum was also established in 2001 to enhance partnership and dialogue between the Government and donors.

### **3.7.2 The Commune Development Planning Process**

Following the February 2002 commune election, all communes adopted and implemented a five-year Commune Development Plan (CDP). The plan is to be prepared and approved by the councils in the first of the five-years of their mandate, and must be reviewed and updated yearly. The CDP is meant to provide the framework for a multi-year Commune Investment Program (CIP) and for the preparation of the annual budget. Besides defining the CDP process, the regulations mandate the establishment in each commune of a broad-based Planning and Budgeting Committee (PBC), a structure meant to facilitate the representation of village-level interests and priorities in the development of commune policies and programs and in the allocation of commune resources (Leonardo G. Romeo, Luc Spyckerelle, 2003).

According to Inter-Ministerial Prakas (Planning and Interior Ministries) No.55 dated on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2002 on Commune Development Planning, the process is divided into five-phases followed by eleven steps summarized in Figure 3.1. Of course, this development planning process is bottom-up approach, but always facilitated by facilitators from provincial and district levels. However, this development planning process has been seen as a significant opportunity for participation from different actors that are involved in rural development. More importantly, the second step in phase one of the planning process was essentially designed as a door that allows the local people to participate in the development planning process.

### **3.7.3 Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Involvement**

Since decentralization policy has been applied for rural development in Cambodia, NGOs have been recognized as important stakeholders in the development processes. The important contribution of NGOs in the rehabilitation, reconstruction and development efforts of Cambodia in the past two decades is well recognized by the Royal Government of Cambodia and International Donor Agencies. This resulted in NGOs being involved heavily in post-conflict reconstruction, emergency relief work, repatriation and resettlement of refugees, and assisting with the implementation of basic services and infrastructure. It can be said that, there was also an immediate and considerable influx of donor aid channeled through NGOs in areas of human



rights, democratization, community development, and natural resource management programs (Curley, 2004).

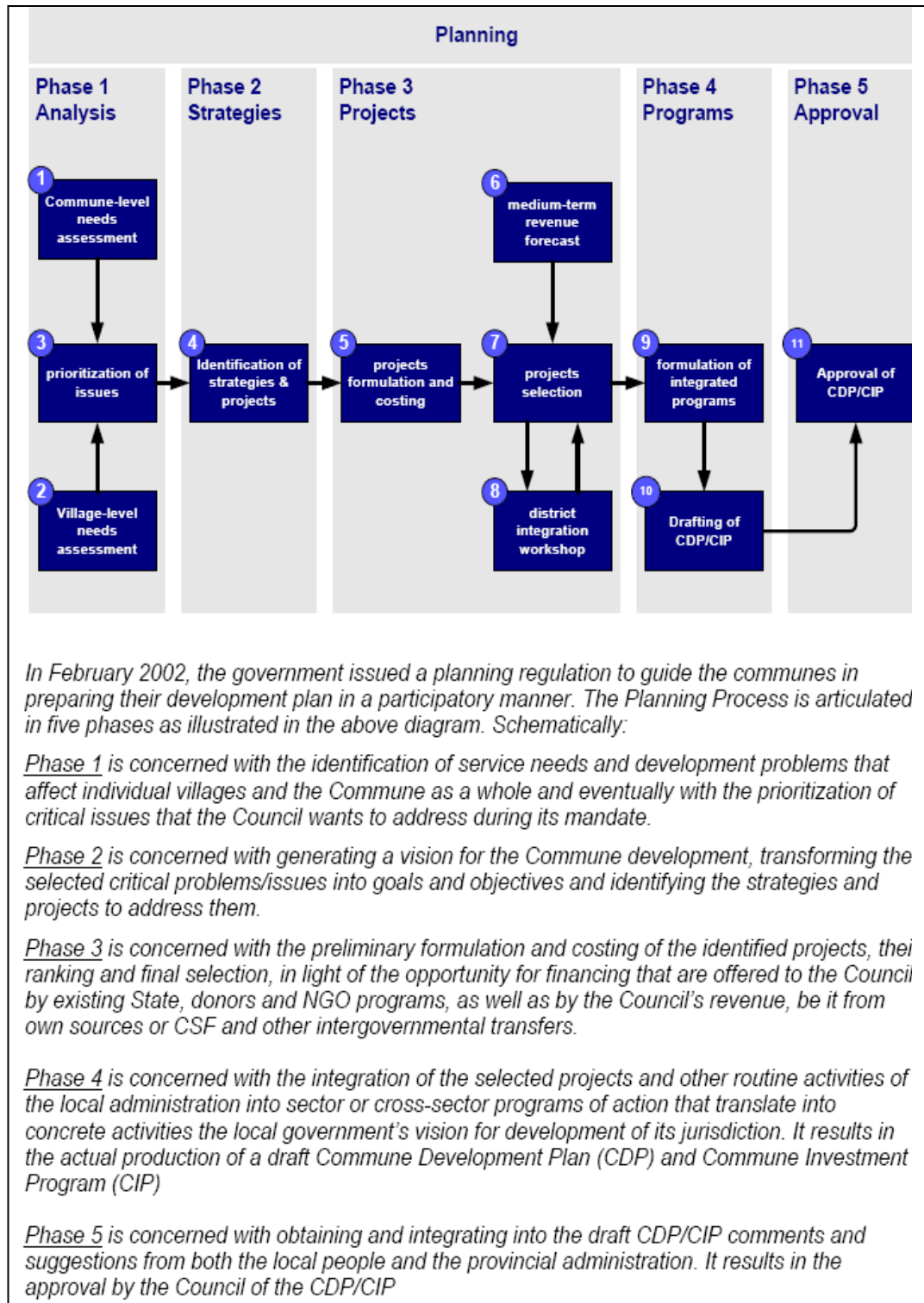


Figure 3.1 the commune Development Planning (CDP) Process  
Source: Leonardo G. Romeo and Luc Spyckerelle, 2003

In 2003, the NGO sector was highly developed. Curley (2004) found that there were approximately 32 working groups in 11 different broad sectors which met to exchange, discuss and collaborate on issue of common concern. The formation of these working groups varies from international and Cambodian NGOs, governmental officials, officials of international organizations, and grassroots community and farming groups. These 11 sectoral areas are: (1) Cambodian NGO coordination; (2) de-mining; democracy and human rights; (3) disability and rehabilitation; (4) environment and natural resource management; (5) gender; (6) NGO membership organizations; (7) social sector (8) health; (9) HIV/Aids; (10) child welfare rights; and (11) education.

Today, NGOs continue to play a crucial role in supporting the provision of basic social services, often in remote areas and communities, and are present in every province in Cambodia. More importantly, NGOs bring alternative models and approaches to development, emphasizing participation, equity, gender sensitivity and environmental sustainability. NGOs have been instrumental in advocating for national reforms that pave the way for improvements in health, education, human rights, legal system, social services, environment and women and children's rights.

The presence of a large NGO community is characterizing the Cambodian society of today to a great extent. At the end of the 1980's there were about 20 NGOs in Cambodia, all international NGOs (INGOs) working mainly in the humanitarian relief sector (Barton, 2001 cited in World Bank, 2006). The number of local NGOs and associations however continues to rise and today the numbers of INGOs, NGOs and associations, which are operating in Cambodia, have been estimated at more than 1,000. Although the statistics of NGOs in Cambodia vary between 600 and 800, I would point to the World Bank's report on "Managing Risk And Vulnerability In Cambodia: *An Assessment And Strategy for Social Protection*" released in June 2006 which illustrates that civil society in Cambodia has flourished in recent years, with over 200 international NGOs and 800 local NGOs and associations engaging in promoting local development.

To implement their projects, Cambodian NGOs receive support from international NGOs, donor agencies, including various United Nations bodies, and governments of other countries. The Cambodian government itself provides little, if

indeed any, support. According to some NGO workers, the government's attitude toward local NGOs is more of suspicion than cooperation. Between 1996 and 2000, the Cambodian NGOs were estimated to receive more than US\$370 million for implementation of various projects, which is about 20 percent of all the foreign development assistance to Cambodia (Nee, 2000).

### **3.7.4 Decentralized Forest Management**

The application of centralized, bureaucratic and technocratic forest management policies and approaches before post-war society of Cambodia fell to heavy forest degradation, and community traditions and knowledge related to forest management in Cambodia were lost (Braeutigam, 2003). This conventional forest management has been strongly criticized as a failure because of widespread corruption in the forest sector and lack of capacity or real motivation for sustainable forest management of state authorities (CBNRM-LI, 2006). Thus, the opening up of space for people's participation through decentralization policy has become an impetus to change in the natural resource management model from centralized to decentralized, in particular forest management. The change has been believed to be a route to achieve socially responsible governance of forest, improve the supply of forest resources to rural people, and improve sustainability of forest resources (CBNRM-LI, 2006).

Consequently, local participation in forest management is increasingly recognized as an important strategy for sustainable forest resources and contributing to improving rural livelihoods and environmental security. Hence, establishment of community forestry has been encouraged since the early 1990s. Braeutigam (2003) found that the first initiatives of Community-Based Forest Management (CBFM) were initiated by international NGO's at the beginning of the 1990's, such as Concern Worldwide 1991 and MCC 1992, in a few pilot sites in selected provinces including Takeo and Kampong Chhnang province.

The intention was to support local communities to create awareness, establish structures and develop procedures and techniques for a more sustainable management of their forest resources and to rehabilitate degraded forestland. Since then, the development of CBFM, which was mainly driven by the interests of international

NGOs, has resulted in visible success of implemented initiatives, changed national frame conditions, as well as raised awareness among government authorities and communities and triggered a process of paradigm shift. Especially, provincial governments have been eager to support and promote CBFM, although unclear policies have created uncertainty (Braeutigam, 2003).

Importantly, decentralization efforts since the middle of the 1990's and continued support by international donor organizations resulted in the diversification of approaches and the increase of CF Initiatives. Community forestry then grew rapidly. By 2002, there were approximately 83,000 hectares in Cambodia under introduced community forestry management, representing 0.7% of Cambodia's total forest area suitable for community forestry. This area of community forestry encompassed 57 initiatives at 228 sites, and comprised 404 villages and 415,000 people (3.6% of Cambodia's population). These sites were situated in 18 of 24 Cambodian provinces (Fichtenau et al., 2002 cited in Sunderlin, 2006).

McKenney and Tola, 2002 also mention that The Cambodian Development Resource Institute (CDRI) did an inventory of community forestry activities in Cambodia based on existing documents, forestry network information, and phone interviews during January-March 2002. The result was that there were 237 community forests, covering 71,724 ha and affecting 411,440 people. More than half of these were initiated before the year 2000, the earliest in 1991. The data suggests that most community forests were started in the late 1990s, and that the rate of establishment has increased since the year 2000.

Participation space was created through adopting decentralization strategy. Since then, natural resource management by the local community has become popular and with support from NGOs and many international donors, the government accepted. However, the argument is that community forests have been politicized in forest management in order to gain more support from the international community by the Cambodian government. Thanks for allowing establishing some community forests which covered an area about 0.7 percent or 83,000 hectares. While, forest concessions and land concessions for economic purpose were granted to private companies; covering almost five million hectares of forestland, of which 1,006,777

hectares are under economic land concessions and 3,874,029 hectares are under forestry concessions.

The grant of economic concessions has overridden local community development initiatives for sustainable management of land and natural resources. For example, community-based eco-tourism projects of Suy indigenous community in Aura District, Kompong Speu Province were told to stop activities after the grant of the New Cosmo Eco-Tourism Concession (UN-COHCHR, 2007). Likewise, there are some forestry community initiatives that were overridden by the granting of economic land concessions such as O Taneoung Forestry Community and Cham Horb Forestry Community in Kbal Damrey commune, Kratie Province.

### **3.8 Summary**

This chapter was mainly based on existing secondary data to review the change in land resource tenure and development process in Cambodia. In Cambodia, land and other resources attached with the land have been essentially important economic resources and assets to Cambodian people for hundreds of years. The form of land tenure in Cambodia, however, has changed since the arrival of French colonialism. The French introduced land ownership through instituting land administration. Following French colonial withdrawal, between 1954 and 1975, the independent Cambodian government employed the concept of land ownership, but the progress in land management was limited. Falling to the Khmer Rouge regime (1975-1979), Cambodia had no land administration system. Land resource was collectivized, and all land records, including cadastral maps and titles, were destroyed.

The right to own land was reinstated in 1989 and a first land law was enacted in 1992. This 1992 land law was replaced by the new land law which was enacted in 2001. The new law establishment is not only reinforced effectively by the land administration system, but also provided a way of granting social and economic land concessions on land and forestlands to both local and international investors. This has been considered as an economic development effort within the land reform framework of the current government. However, land reform to boost economic growth contrasts with decentralization reform of the government itself.

Under the umbrella of the 2001 Land Law, a million hectares of land and forestland was granted to private companies, both local and international, with the purpose of intensification of agricultural production for “economic growth”. However, the private company concessionaires not only disrespected the rights of access and use to natural forest of the local communities, but also restricted them from natural resource use for their livelihoods. In addition, some economic land concessions were granted on evergreen forested areas and areas which were initiated to be set up as forestry communities by local people with support from NGOs through decentralization policy.

## CHAPTER IV

### LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES: THE TRADITIONAL PRACTICES

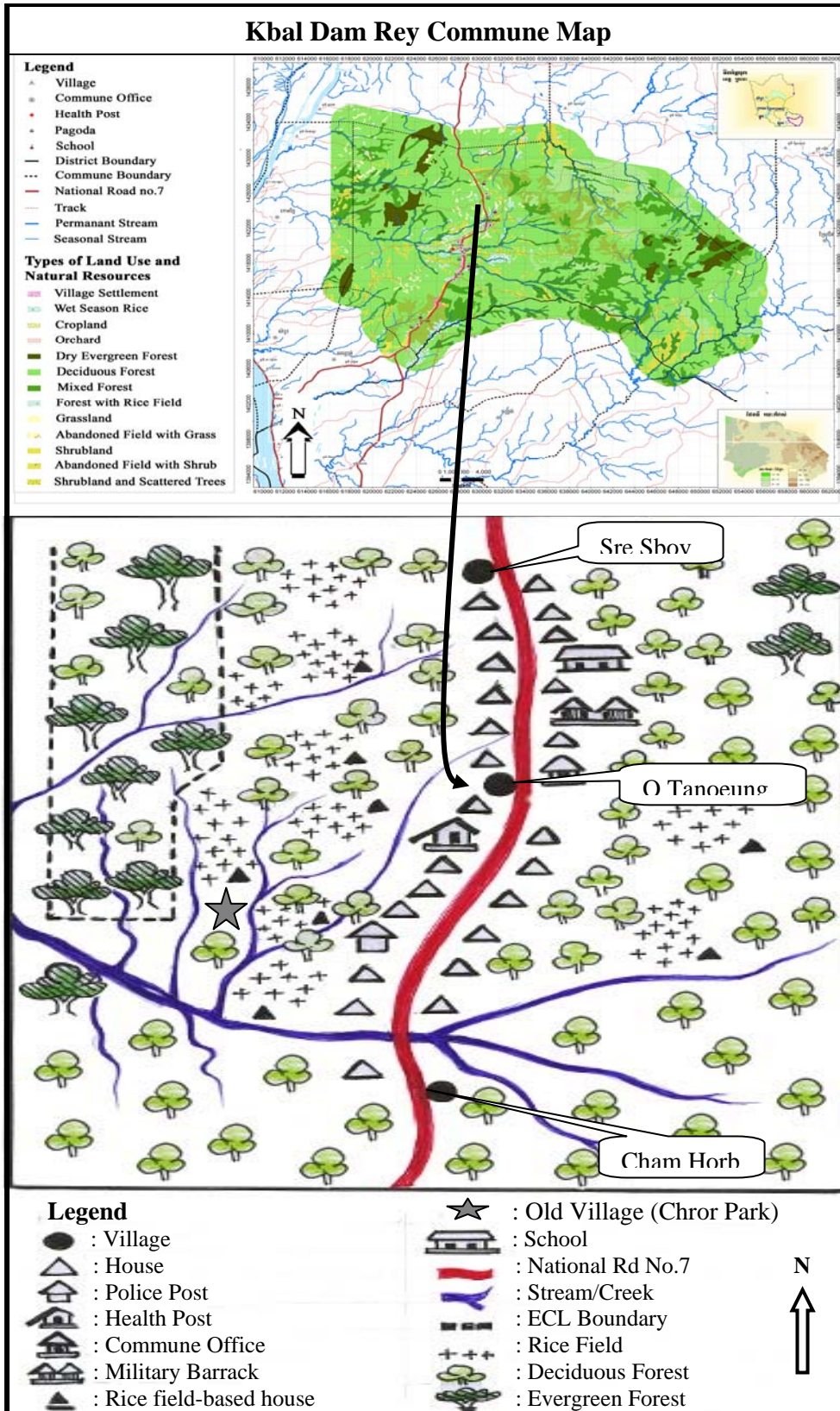
#### 4.1 Geographic and Demographic Background of the Village

##### 4.1.1 History and Geography of the Village

“*O Tanoeung*” is a Khmer term. “*O*” means ‘stream’ and “*Tanoeung*” is the name of “*O*” (Stream). “*Tanoeung*” is a speaking word which is derived from the written word “*Trong Neoung*” meaning ‘in here’. The “*O*” was called O “*Taneoung*” because of a hunter. A 76 year old man, Tok Chean, who was an original resident, described that a long time ago there was a hunter attempting to hunt a big tiger. The hunter always hunted wild animals in the forest by a long “*O*” (stream). One day he saw a big tiger and he tried to hunt that tiger with his bow. The tiger ran down from upstream in the East, to downstream toward the Mekong River in the West.

Along the stream, there was a big rock and the tiger jumped up on the rock, then jumped down another side of the rock and ran away into the thick forest in that region. A few days later, the hunter came again with some other people to the big rock and told those people that he ran after a big tiger until he got “*Taneoung*” (in here)—to the big rock. That place is now known as “*Klar Stous*” meaning “Tiger Jump”, presently located in *Koh Knher* Commune, which shares a boundary with the Kbal Dam Rey commune in the West. Since then the stream has been called O Tanoeung. Later on there were some people settled nearby the stream and they named their village O Tanoeung village.

Presently, the O Tanoeung village is one amongst five villages of Kbal Dam Rey commune. The villagers have settled along the national Rd. No.7, in the centre of the commune. The village does not have a clear boundary in the East and the West, because both of these sides are forested areas, grazing land and paddy rice fields. However, the village has a clear boundary in the South shared with Cham Horb village and with Sre Sbov village in the North. In reality, the village can be only separated residentially from its neighboring villages; but it does not have clear-cut boundary lines which can precisely separate its cultivated area from the other villages. (Figure 4.1).



**Figure 4.1 Location of O Tanoeung Village**



The villagers created their rice fields on available land best suited for rice production in the community geography without caring much about the village's boundary or the government's administrative system. In addition, for their living, they go to collect forest products or hunt anywhere in the region based on their own ability (capacity and knowledge). The demarcated boundary does not limit them from their rights of access to the natural capital of livelihoods. This implies that the village boundary which determines the border from one village to another is socially and politically constructed in order to easily identify and control the people in this region. However, in the way the local community practices their livelihood activities, the community may be seen as a complex entity containing individuals differentiated by status, economic power, social prestige, and intention. In this sense, it best matches to the claim of Agrawal and Gibson (2001) that the community is a complex entity (see in Chapter 2, section 2.2).

The village has been in the current location since the 1940s, after moving from an original village, namely *Chror Park*, that was settled for many generations. Before moving to the current location, the people were living in a forested village (*Chror Park*), located about six kilometers from the current one in the West closing to old dense forest area of *Preah Mei* hill (Local Term= *Pnum Preah Mei*). During my data collection, I walked with two young men from the current village to visit that old village. Meanwhile, I found that there were some old/tall palms trees, old/big mango trees, old tamarind trees and some plots of paddy fields around, proving that it was a location that used to have people living in it. Some of paddy fields are still cultivated by O Tanoeng villagers. After meeting Mr. Yeoung's family, which was temporarily staying at their rice field-based house, we continued secretly walking guided by Mr. Yeoung to the land concession area to hunt wild animals. Along the ways that we were looking for animals, we could see some parts of economic land concession were overlapped over forestland sought as a community forest by the local community through the commune development plan (see in Chapter V, section 5.1.2).

In the area of the old village, *Chror Park*, was found paddy rice fields, palm trees, mango trees, tamarind trees, which were evidence to acknowledge the thrust of the village settlement. Culturally, Cambodian/ Khmer people like to grow rice and plant palm trees nearby their rice fields, and they also like to grow mango trees or

tamarind trees around their residential area. The area has been covered by deciduous forest and forest with patches of rice field, and it is adjacent to evergreen forested area that is now under the control of the Global Agricultural Development (Cambodia) co. Ltd (see in section 5.2.4, Chapter V). There are also some natural creeks such as O Srór Mor, O Chhleak, O Tram Sbal, O Tanoeung, O Kao Sou, O Traus, O Ta Maung and so forth serving as sources for natural life in that region. Based on diversity of the geographical characteristics, we could understand that the people at that time had well thought about their livelihood security.

According to Tok Sad, an 82-year old man; the village had been moved to settle in the current location because the French protectorate built the national road No.7. He mentioned that the road was built when he was 15 years old, and he was required to work on that construction. During the road construction, the government at that time began to call for the people who were living in the forest to come out to settle along sides of the road. However, if we look back in the Cambodian history during that time we will see that it was the time of growing Khmer nationalist resistance to the French protectorate. Therefore, the logic behind collecting people from the old village was probably that the French tried to ease control of people in order to prevent resistance of the Khmer nationalist group called “Issarak” on the one hand, and to easily collect tax under the colonial system, from the local people, on the other hand. It also can be said that the people themselves wanted to live along the road sides because they may have wanted to see development of such good new roads and other people as well, and the location is not so far from the original village and full of natural forests and abundant natural resources.

Based on the discussion about geographic location and scratching the location map of the current village by key informants, the village geography was identified under three categories. First, residential location was located along the national road No.7. Second, the deciduous forest areas were just located behind residential houses. The villagers’ paddy rice fields and grasslands could be found in this area. Lastly, the evergreen forest area (Local Term: *Prey Chas or Prey Stok*) is located further from the deciduous forest areas. It is about 5 or 6 km from the residential location. This forested area has been considered as home of good value tree species and wildlife. Before the land concession company’s arrival, in terms of access to forest resources

and hunting, the area was likely open access, because it was not only the O Taoeung villagers, but also the people from other villages such Cham Hor, Sre Sbov and some other villages of neighboring communes that could freely access to these resources. Currently, this evergreen forest area, however, belongs to the Global Agricultural Development (Cambodia) co. Ltd for 70 a year contract.

#### **4.1.2 The O Tanoeung Village's Profile: An Overview**

##### **4.1.2.1 Demographic Characteristics**

In this section, the general information of the O Tanoeung Village is provided in order to understand the statistics of population and its characteristics in this village. According to group discussion, the village population remarkably grew in the late 1980s and 1990s. The discussion could not find an accurate number of populations before the Pol Pot regime, as they could not remember well and could not find a consensus. However, some estimated that it was about 40 to 50 households. The group revealed that this area fell to gunfire fighting between Lon Nol's government and Khmer Rouge soldiers following the 1970 coupe d'etat and often the Khmer Rouge soldiers passed through that area. Thus, some villagers were just living in the forest, far from the fighting area where it was easy to find food from the forest products.

Falling to the Pol Pot regime, the villagers were not evacuated to somewhere<sup>1</sup> else, but they were separated to collectively work based on age and sex in that region. During this period, the group mentioned that everyone had to work hard on irrigation construction and rice production, and they were not allowed to visit any neighbors (more information in Chapter III, section 3.3.4). After this dark regime, in the early 1980s, the villagers came back to live together with their family in the village. However, during our discussion the group failed to provide a clear population quantity, because they did not remember well; but they estimated that it was not more than 40 households. It was assumed that some missing villagers were either killed or starved to death during the Pol Pot regime or fled somewhere else.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the village never had a clear record of villagers, because the area was still insecure, and administrative management was not

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<sup>1</sup> In this regime, most of people were evacuated from one province to another around the country.

enforced. However, it was noted that the population increased through increasing marriage of young men and women in the village and newly born babies. By 2003, after the 2002 commune election, the Five-Year Development Plan (2003-2007) showed 97 households in the village, whereas the Commune had 634 households in total. However, the village data book, which was designed by the Ministry of Planning and filled out by the ex-village head and the ex-commune clerk in 2004, reliably showed that the village had 107 households, of which 248 members were men and 260 were women.

For this study, the village information was however collected while I was staying in the village in May 2008. I designed a table as a recording tool for village information, which mainly focused on members of household, sex, age, education, occupation, number of cow/oxen and buffalo and area of rice fields and *Cham Kar* of the villagers. Then, one knowledgeable villager was employed to collect information from the whole village. Ms. Hun Poeun, a 50-year-old knowledgeable woman was employed to work with the recording tool, from the 20<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> of May 2008. The result is described as follows:

The village currently has 130 households in total; most of them are original residents or were born in the village. 130 households consist of 615 persons, which include 305 males and 310 females. This number increased about 100 households compared to the first establishment of the village in the 1940s, when there were only around 30 households. More precisely, the numbers of households increased 23 households or 18 percent if it was compared to the number of households in 2004.

According to each household's information, the largest households have 11 members and the smallest ones have 2 members, with an average household size of about 5 members. All of the villagers are of the majority Khmer ethnicity and follow Theravada Buddhism. Approximately 97 percent of the population work as farmers. Others are petty traders and officials. The 97 % farmers hold 106.7 hectares of paddy rice fields and 7.4 hectares of farmland (*Cham Kar*). The rest have been working as village head, commune officers, teachers, soldiers and petty traders. In fact, all of these occupational types could not precisely be separated from the farming occupation, because people holding those occupations also grow rice and raise cattle. Besides working on rice production and collecting forest products, most of the

villagers like to raise cattle because the area is rich in forest and grazing land (Figure 4.2). In the whole village, there are 1007 cattle in total, including 637 cow/oxen and 370 buffalos. The cattle are practically freely released to the field to find their food by themselves.

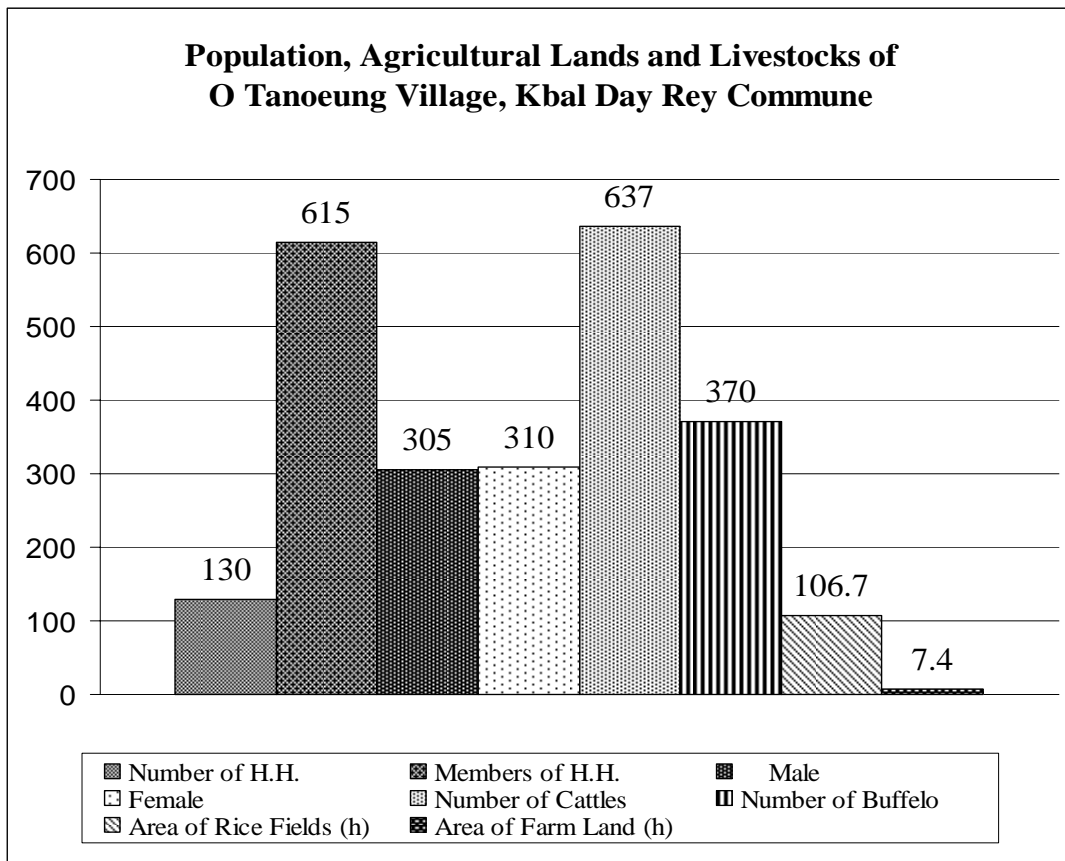


Figure 4.2 Population, Agricultural land and livestock of O Tanoeng village

In this study, the population of the O Tanoeng village is categorized into three groups according to their age in order to show potentiality of the labor force in the villagers (Table 4.1). The first group has ages less than 18 years old, and the group occupies 43 percent of the total population. This group is considered as childhood and teenager and that their labor contributions have not yet had potential for any work or economic activities, especially for the private sector. In Cambodia, a person, who can be legally employed, must be at least 18 years old. Instead, this group needs to go school. Scholl enrollment institutionally can be started at 6 years old.

However, I found that many teenagers engage in some work such as housework, farming work, looking after cattle and collecting forest products. The

second group is from 18 years old up to 60 years, and the group occupies 52 percent of the total population. This group is considered to be the productive/effective laborers for economic activities. The third group is older than 60 years. The group occupies 5 percent of the total population and is considered to be the old people who cannot work hard.

**Table 4.1 Population Characteristics of O Tanoeung Village**

Sex	Age Groups			Total
	<18	18-60	>60	
Male	132	158	15	305
Female	133	164	14	310
<b>Total</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>615</b>

*The age groups were classified within the 130 households*

#### **4.2.2.2 The Village Infrastructures**

➤ **Road and Transportation:** Since the village geography is forested we could not find many good roads in the village. We could find only a hard surface road, National Road No. 7, which was built during the French colonial period but rehabilitated in 2004 and completed in 2007. The villager houses were settled on both sides of the road. If we left the national road, we could only find ox-cart roads or tracks for going to the villagers' rice fields and to the forest. Ox-carts or buffalo carts are a very common way for the local people to travel to their rice fields and to transport their farm and forest products to the village. Generally, bicycles are used to travel in the village as well as in the commune. From my observation, about 80 percent of the villagers have bicycles as their means of local travel. Motorcycles are also common for the villagers to travel somewhere far from the commune, but less than 40 percent of the villagers have a motorcycle.

➤ **Market:** Neither O Tanoeung village, nor the whole Kbal Damrey commune has a market place. Although the area is just 50 km from Kratie town and there is now a good road (Rd. No.7), the community has not yet had any market for the local people to sell their products or buy food and some materials. However, there are some mobile traders who use motorbikes as means of transportation from the Kratie town to sell some products and foods to the local people (see pictures in

appendix B). Every morning, there were at least three motorbikes carrying meat, fresh fish, fermented fish, fermented vegetables, fresh vegetables and some kinds of cooked foods to sell to the villagers. Although the villagers rely generally on wild vegetables, wildlife meat and some vegetables and livestock from their home garden for their daily food, they still need to buy some foods from mobile traders. Meanwhile, those traders purchase Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP) from the villagers such as hard resin, mushrooms, bamboo shoots and also wildlife.

➤ **Water Resource:** O Taneoung village does not yet have any irrigation system for agricultural production. The villagers' rice cultivation on more than one hundred hectares of paddy rice fields totally depends on rainfall. If there is enough rain, the farmers will get high yields of their rice and just the opposite if there is not enough rain.

For drinking water, in the 1970s, two hand operated wells were dug for the villagers' use. However, some of the oldest villagers said that the two hand operated wells did not have enough water for supplying all villagers, especially in the dry season. Thus the villagers went to take water from the O Taneoung (Taneoung Stream) as they had usually practiced before the 1970s. This practice was continued until the early 2000s. Added to the two hand operated wells the village presently has seven pump wells and one more dug pond. Two of seven pump wells were made in the early 1990s by an NGO. The other five wells and a dug community pond were made after first general commune/Sangkat election by using commune budget which was allocated from the central government. According to the 30 selected households, these wells and dug pond also had contributions from the villagers between 2,000 to 6,000 Riel per household depending on the households' wealth.

➤ **Education:** One concrete school was built in the same area of an old and collapsing wooden school in the territory of O Taneoung village. The school includes both primary and secondary levels namely O Taneoung School. The school has only two buildings, one of them is for the primary level and another one is for the secondary level. The primary level building was built in 2001 with financial support from the Nippon Foundation and the Social Fund. It has five rooms used for grade one to grade six. The secondary-level building was built in 2006 with financial support

from Birgite and Hans Boegh-Soerensen and the Ministry of Education Youth and Sport, and a Loan from ADB. It also has five classrooms, but only two classrooms are being used for grade seven and eight. The school has not yet had students at grade nine, but it will be created next year (2009) by enrollment of the students who will graduate from grade eight.

According to the primary school teachers, there were only three teachers at the primary level, and there were 141 pupils in total, mainly from O Tanoeng village and some from the neighboring villages. At the secondary level, the teachers also revealed that there were only three teachers, and there were 67 students in total; they were from the villages around the commune (Table 4.2). Those teachers revealed that they are not local residents, but they are from other districts of Kratie province. They complained about their difficulties in teaching over there and that they had a very low salary, which was often paid to them late. There was also a lack of appropriated accommodation. Moreover, they did not have enough teaching materials. Because of the lack of teachers, the pupils who were of grade one and two were put in one class, grade three and four in one class, and grade five and six in one class, but they were organized to sit into two groups based on their respective grade. Such practices showed that the education in this community was very challenging. The teachers faced inadequate salaries and teaching materials, while the students faced inadequate facilities.

**Table 4.2 Number of pupils of O Tanoeng School in 2008**

Grade	Number of Pupils		Total
	Male	Female	
1	13	14	27
2	14	18	32
3	11	10	21
4	7	12	19
5	7	7	14
6	9	19	28
7	23	11	34
8	22	11	33
<b>Total</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>208</b>

*Source: survey 2008 (with help from Teacher of each class of O Tanoeng School)*



In Kbal Damrey Commune, primary school could be found in each village, but the secondary school could be found only in O Tanoung village; and it was just established in 2006. Therefore, in the O Tanoeng School, most of the pupils at the primary level (from grade 1 to 6) were from the O Tanoeng village, but the quantity of the pupils who are from O Tanoeng village decreased more than half at the secondary level (Table 4.3). The school attendance has always been affected by the need for children to be involved in rice production work. Some of students often do not attend school during the busiest time of planting and harvesting rice.

**Table 4.3 Numbers of Pupils From Different Villages of the Commune in 2008**

Village	Primary						Secondary		Total
	Grade						Grade		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
O Tanoeng	26	28	21	15	10	22	9	7	138
Sre Sbov	1	4	0	3	0	0	13	12	33
Cham Horb	0	0	0	1	2	2	6	4	15
O Po	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	1	5
Sre Treng	0	0	0	0	0	2	6	9	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>208</b>
	<b>141</b>						<b>67</b>		

*Source: survey 2008 (with help from Teacher of each class of O Tanoeng School)*

In Cambodia, children are encouraged to enter the first grade of primary school when they reach six years old. In O Tanoeng School, many pupils/students in each grade were however not at the grade level that they would expect for their age. Based on student's name list, I found that in grade one, 16 out of 27 pupils were older than 6 years old; in grade two, 21 out of 32 pupils were older than 7 years old; in grade three 19 out of 21 were older than 8 years old; in grade four, 18 out of 19 pupils were older than 9 years old; in grade five, 12 out of 14 pupils were older than 10 years old; in grade six, 21 out of 28 pupils were older than 11 years old; in grade seven 30 out of 34 students were older than 12 years old; and in grade eight 29 out of 33 students were older than 13 years old (See details in table 4.4).

This educational arrangement shows that the education in this community is very poor. With such an educational condition, there is doubt about how these children will become literate. If they do not get a good education from the beginning

of their age, they will have a hard time finding any job besides farming work. In this condition, land and other natural resources must be needed to make their living; otherwise they will face with some difficulties in their livelihood. However, one would assume that they would become physical laborers with little pay and bad work conditions for those concession companies as most of the forestland and attached natural resources are under those concession companies control.

**Table 4.4 Age of Pupils in Each Grade of O Taneung School in 2008**

Age of Pupils	Primary Level						Secondary Level	
	Grade						Grade	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
6	11	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	6	11	1	-	-	-	-	-
8	6	10	2	1	-	-	-	-
9	1	6	8	1	1	-	-	-
10	1	3	2	4	1	1	-	-
11	1	1	2	-	1	6	-	-
12	-	-	4	2	3	1	4	-
13	-	-	2	2	3	5	9	4
14	1	-	-	5	2	6	15	3
15	-	1	-	1	2	4	6	8
16	-	-	-	3	-	2	-	8
17	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	9
18	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
19	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
>20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>33</b>

*Source: survey 2008 (with help from Teacher of each class of O Taneung School)*

➤ **Health Services:** In June 2007, a health post was completely constructed in O Taneung village to serve people in the village as well the whole commune. The post construction was funded by the people of Japan and the Japanese government through Japan's Grant Assistance for Grass-Roots/ Human Security Projects 2007 implemented by the Cambodian Medical Services Support Organization (CMSSO). Actually, the Five-Year Development Plan (2003-2007) and the 2003 Commune Investment Plan of the Kbal Damrey commune defined building the health post as a high priority for providing health services to the local people, but the plan was not immediately implemented by the Cambodian government. It was postponed until

2007 and was built with funding from the people and government of Japan. Even though the post was already built the health services are still poor, because the post has a lack of medicines and experienced physicians.

Generally, the villagers access to private medicine sellers to buy medicines or ask for cures when they got sick. There are two medicine sellers in the O Tanoeng village and they often drive their new and modern motorbike around the village carrying a black medicine bag to sell medicines to the villagers. One of them is known as head of the health post. The local people usually use traditional medicines to cure some kinds of diseases, but they seem to put more trust in the scientific methods of curing diseases. In cases where the disease is not serious, they use traditional medicines or buy medicines from the local sellers. However, if they have serious illnesses they go to the hospital in the Kratie town.

➤ **Local governmental offices:** Since the village is the center of the commune, I found that the commune, presently, does not have any commune office. Of course, the commune used to have one before 2000, but it was in very bad shape. Since then, a new office has not been built. After the 2002 communal election until now, the office has rented space in a villager's house to operate the commune's administrative work. This can be said to be a lack of responsibility of the local government, especially at the communal, district and provincial level. It is unbelievable that an area which is surrounded by forests many kinds of good timber, cannot build one commune office for operating their work.

There is one small communal police post, about 4x6 meters in size with a zinc roof and wooden wall. The post is located nearby O Tanoeng Bridge. There are four or five police officials that often can be seen in the office, but sometime they disappear. These few police officials have been complained that they do not help the villagers much in terms of security in the community. For example, the villagers' cattle were stolen many times, but police never arrest any thieves in time, even though they were asked for intervention in the case. Instead, they are indirectly involved in illegal logging through occasional and monthly collection of money from the loggers, and collection of money from cars and trucks which illegally transport plywood and wood past their office.

There was also one forestry official booth in the village. During my data collection, the booth was temporarily settled in the North of the village nearby the kilometer post No. 377 of the national road No.7. In the booth, there were two or three forestry officials and one or two policemen. Of course, their work is to prevent forest resources from illegal harvest and to control timber and wood product transportation. However, these officials were complained that they not only don't respond to their tasks, but they also commit corruption by receiving money from those illegal loggers and transporters. According to a man who used to be a wood transporter, there were five forestry official booths from Kbal Damrey commune to Kratie town, a distance of only about 50 km. He reveals that each wood transporter had to pay a bribe to each booth and had to pay a bribe of US\$40 to the forestry cantonment of Kratie province (Forestry Khan). The man said *"If we don't bribe them, we will be arrested and fined"*

Another armed force's office in the village is a military barrack. The barrack was built on the former area of the communal office with zinc roof and wooden wall, a bit bigger than the police post. This is known as session 2 under the Kratie provincial limitary. Some of the military officials were hired by economic land concession companies to protect the companies and forest resources in the concessions' boundary, and some of them are involved in the same forest crime as the police officials. One day, while I was interviewing a household at about 5.30 pm, there was a military official who came to hire the head of the household to operate his illegal sawmill. The head of household explained that he works as a log pusher (to push logs into an operating saw). For this work, he could earn money up to 45,000 Riel per day, because he could push 3m<sup>3</sup> of logs into the sawmill per day (the labor fee is 15,000 Riel per 1m<sup>3</sup>).

## **4.2 Land Utilization of the Village**

### **4.2.1 Land Use Pattern and Ownership Characteristics**

Based on key informants and group discussion, land property in O Tanoeng village can be classified into three kinds according to its use by the villagers to support their living condition. The three kinds are described as follows: Firstly, settlement land is the land that the settlers built their house on and is practically

recognized by local authorities and villagers and others even though the settlers do not have land title or certificate to that land. This means that the land can be transferred, given use rights or sold to others, by the land owners.

Secondly, farming land is the land that has been occupied and cultivated by the villagers, generally known as rice field. This kind of land is similar to the settlement land in possession, because it is recognized by the local authorities and villagers in the form of traditional practice, and it can be transferred, given use rights or sold to others, although the possessors do not have any certificate for that land.

Lastly, forestland is land that is covered by trees and forests. This kind of land theoretically belongs to the state, and is known as public land. This land can be categorized into three types including evergreen forest, deciduous forest, and grassland areas. Practically, those land types have been used by the local people to support their livelihoods, and they have never asked for any permission to do so. For example, the villagers have accessed forested areas to search for non-timber forest products or some construction materials and/or the villagers have fed their animals by freely releasing them to the grassland areas.

#### **4.2.2 Traditional land Use as a Form of Natural Resource Management**

As mentioned earlier, the O Tanoeng village was moved from an old place called Chror Park in the 1940s, which is located about 6 kilometers to the west of the current location. It is close to an evergreen forest area which is now under control of a land concession company. The villagers were living in this forest for many generations and they clearly know the regional geography. Geographically, the area was abundant forestland and rich in forest resources, but with a small population. Further, Cambodia fell into political crisis and civil war in the early 1970s, and this crisis continued until the first half of the 1990s. The more than 20 years of war destroyed most of the physical infrastructure and left the country with poverty, poor infrastructure and insecurity. For these reasons, the local natural resources were not exploited to feed market demand.

Therefore, the study found that the local people enjoyed those abundant natural resources for their livelihood for many generations without being concerned about resource decline. However, the way they access to agricultural land can be

elaborated as a form of natural resource management in this community. Historically, the villagers were settled in the region for probably 100 years, and the people have been living based on rice production followed by livestock and forest resource products. This livelihood practice was destroyed when the Khmer Rouge took control over the country in 1975. In this regime, all agricultural lands were collectively cultivated under an extreme communist administrative system. Moreover, the people had to work full time on farms everyday, and they were offered food by a collective kitchen.

Soon after the failure of this dark regime in 1979, the villagers were organized into groups in order to implement the collectivized agricultural like elsewhere in the country, known as *Krom Samaki*. The lands were claimed as state property and distributed to the *Krom Samaki* to use for agricultural and residential purposes (see in Chapter III, section 3.3.5). By that time, the village had about 40 households, thus the agricultural land was not cultivated due to less labor and the fact that the people needed rice products only for home consumption. A few years later, the *Krom Samaki* implementation failed, and some villagers returned to occupy their own land which they used to cultivate before the Pol Pot period, while others started to clear forests to make their own rice fields. This practice has continued until this last decade.

This study however found that all of the 130 households are holding agricultural land of only about 100 hectares. This means that each household is occupying agricultural land not more than one hectare on average, even though they have lived in the region since a long time ago (more detail in section 4.3.2.1 and 4.3.2.2 below). Furthermore, the land has been continually cultivated from one generation to another. The way they access to agricultural land and their agricultural techniques are only for their home consumption, not for commercial purpose. The people cleared forest to create rice fields only in the deciduous forest areas; they did not touch the evergreen forest at all, because they understood that that area is home of good tree species and many kinds of wildlife. An exception was made when they needed some construction materials for this forest. Significantly, the village had very few big wooden houses while most were small houses with leaf or thatch roof and walls. This illustrates that the villagers did not consume much timber or trees for construction materials. They extracted some timber only for their basic needs. It can

be argued, however, that this was because there was no market demand in that period of time.

However, in the second half of the 1990s, the country fully gained peace. Following peace, the country had more security and many development projects were planned and implemented in order to reduce poverty. Within these better conditions, powerful groups began seeking opportunities to benefit from land and forest resources. This notion led to an increase in natural resource exploitation. As a result, the local people realized that the resources, which they used to rely on, became scarce. Therefore, the locals began considering how to manage the resources since they had concern about a lack of land and natural resources for their livelihoods and their young generations as well.

Most significantly, the people proposed to create community forestry in the commune development plan in 2003, which was the beginning of opening to local participation in the development planning process. Soon after the 2002 communal election, a local development planning process was implemented within the decentralization framework. With this chance, the local people have an opportunity to raise their concerns about natural resource decline in the development planning process. They further initiated creating community forestry in the village, because they realized that natural resources in their community had decreased and that there was a lack of visible management response to illegal logging by some powerful people.

However, their will has been destroyed by state based development projects—economic land concession for industrial plantations. The locals are presently concerned very much about losing land and forest due to the presence of economic concessions. Most of villagers complained that the space for their cattle raising becomes smaller and no land reserves for next generations. Villagers said “*the next generations will not know the value timbers/trees; the people will not hear the voice of wild animals and cannot find any NTFP if the companies still continue to clear forests*”. This statement is significant to show the link between the local people’s way of life to natural resource management in their respective community. More importantly, the people recently denied working for the company as they have been realized that that company has been destroying natural resources which are their

livelihood means. These actions can also be expressed by the villagers' willingness and desire to engage in natural resource management to maintain their resources for their future generations.

### **4.3 Livelihood Activities of O Tanoeng Villagers**

The livelihoods of forest communities are based on rice plantations, fishing, raising animals, collecting NTFP from the forest and doing off-farm work. The livelihoods of the villagers as well as of the people of Kbal Damrey Commune are varied and diverse (Table 4.5). In the traditional way of life, the community residents are typical of rural societies that are farming and natural resource reliant. Rice cultivation is considered the most important livelihood component in the community. Hence, I found that the villagers' efforts generally focus on paddy-field rice production as the most important activity. Other activities are also essential to allow them to have variation in diet and for generation of cash income. The income sources, which are beyond their rice staple, allow the purchase of some necessary goods that cannot be produced in the home and also overcome livelihood risk and food insecurity by providing alternate activities in the case of rice crop failure or inadequacy.

The activities are all listed in the below table to illustrate the diversity of livelihood activities in the village. The table shows many current livelihood activities that the villagers, individuals or their household members engaged in either regularly or occasionally. All of the activities were described by the interviewees from O Tanoeng village, both individual households and group discussion. Many interviewees mentioned rice cultivation is essential activity for the villagers because rice is main diet for them, and following by cattle raising that main source of labor to cultivate paddy rice and to generate income. While, other activities including collecting hard resin, raising animals, working for others, collecting vines, bamboo, potatoes, growing vegetables and so forth are subordinate to their livelihood activities and common to them to practice in the life as forest dwellers.



**Table 4.5 Current Livelihood Activities in O Tanoeng Village**

Seasonal Activities		Year Round Activities
Raining Season	Dry Season	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• grow wet rice</li> <li>• rice Chamkar</li> <li>• grow corn</li> <li>• grow vegetables for home consumption only</li> <li>• work for others</li> <li>• collect hard resin</li> <li>• collect bamboo shoot</li> <li>• collect mushroom</li> <li>• collect paddy field crab</li> <li>• collect wild potatoes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• move timber (using ox cart)</li> <li>• transport plywood for wood traders (using ox cart)</li> <li>• work for plywood sawmill</li> <li>• saw timber (for others)</li> <li>• collect thatch for house roof</li> <li>• harvest from palms (for palm sugar &amp; wine)</li> <li>• make and sell rice cake</li> <li>• blacksmith</li> <li>• collect honey</li> <li>• rice harvest</li> <li>• cutting bamboo</li> <li>• collect vine</li> <li>• searching honey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• hunting/trapping</li> <li>• fishing</li> <li>• raise chickens, ducks pigs and cattle</li> <li>• make rice wine</li> <li>• collect firewood</li> <li>• mill rice for others</li> <li>• collect paddy crab</li> <li>• collect wild potatoes</li> <li>• battery charger</li> <li>• soldiers</li> <li>• village chief</li> <li>• commune officials</li> <li>• local physician/ medicine sellers</li> </ul>

*Source: field survey 2007*

However, some villagers worked for illegal loggers instead of collecting NTFP due to forest entry restrictions by the economic land concession company. The livelihood activities seem more diverse as some villagers have been involving with logging activities such as moving logs, transporting wood/ plywood, cutting trees, working for “seasonal sawmills or mobile sawmill” [...a set of machines for sawing logs to be plywood; it usually is moved to be close to the timber’s source in the forest. This set of machines is able to produce about 5m<sup>3</sup> of plywood a day] (see picture in Appendix B).

#### **4.3.1 Agricultural land and Livestock**

“Land is a rice pot”. This statement is very deep in the sense of the local people to the land for growing rice. The people consider that land is as important as a “pot for cooking rice”. They want to emphasize that if they have land it means they

will have rice to put in the pot for cooking for their daily diet. Whenever they were talking about “food” they mainly focused on “cooked rice”, which in the Cambodian language is called *Baay*. Cooked rice—*Baay* is the main food for rural people in Cambodia from the morning to evening time. For example, in O Tanoeng village, when we ask the villager “what do you have for breakfast”? They simply answer “cooked rice”—*Baay*, or “old cooked rice”—*Baay Kork*.

Traditionally, rural people eat rice for each and every meal. It is much more significant than Chinese noodles or bread and coffee that are the common breakfast for city dwellers. This illustrates the importance of rice as a staple in rural Cambodian cooking and food security. Moreover, the O Tanoeng villagers express that rice is most important to them by saying that “We do not worry at all if we have enough rice at home”. Almost everyone in O Tanoeng Village grows rice, because they believe that “if they have rice they have everything”. This is the same to many rural Cambodian people. In Cambodia, more than 80% of the people, who are rural residents, depend on agriculture for their livelihoods and rice farming is the basis for food security, employment and income. Therefore, we can see that the O Tanoeng villagers as well as Cambodian rural people consider agricultural land as a base of food production for their life.

#### **4.3.1.1 Access to Agricultural Land**

Paddy rice fields are the main source of the O Tanoeng villagers’ livelihood. Presently, there are 106.7 hectares of paddy rice fields and 7.4 hectares of farmland (*Cham Kar*), scattered about the area, and not found in one large single piece since people only clear small land for household consumption. Agriculture is clearly the dominant activity, with nearly all households noting it is as their primary occupation. Some of the rice fields were cleared after the failure of collectivized agriculture “*Krom Samaki*” in the early 1980s, but some were passed down from their old generation. Of course, the ownership rights to property including land were destroyed during the time of 1975-1979, but some villagers reoccupied their rice fields after that regime, in particular after the failure of “*Krom Samaki*”. For instance, Mrs. Poen’s rice field about 1.5 ha, was taken from the forest by her parents in the 1950s, and was passed to her family.

Immediately following the victory of Vietnamese troop- based Cambodian libertarian forces over the Pol Pot regime, Cambodia attempted to implement a collectivized agricultural production (*Krom Samaki*=sodality group) based on administrative and political unites of the people's revolutionary committee (see more in Chapter III, section 3.3.5). This strategy was claimed to be a way to overcome food insecurity or primary survival in food shortage after Cambodia had been released from the killing fields and lack of laborers, agricultural inputs and so forth. However the strategy could be seen in another way - which it was a mode of production for economics of socialism.

During the *Krom Samaki* implementation, the villagers in O Tanoeng as well as other villagers in that region were divided into groups. Each group had up to 12 households as members and they collectively worked on rice production. Hence, the rice products were divided to each household member based on labor potentiality. Meanwhile, the laborers were classified into three categories in terms of agricultural production: first, full laborers which referred to youth and not too old men and women; second, children or adolescents who were not considered to have reached their full labor potential; and third, old men and women who were considered less productive laborers. After rice harvest, the division of the rice products to the group members was done as follows: The first group (full laborers) was given 10 Tang (240 kg) of rice per person. The second group was given 5 Tang (120 kg) of rice per person, and the third group was given 3 Tang (72 kg) per person.

Such a model of agricultural production was practiced only a few years in the early 1980s. The *Krom Samaki* was somehow broken up, and the villagers individually began to occupy the existing paddy rice fields and to clear forest to create paddy rice fields. As the area had abundant forestland, and the population was still small (see in section 4.1.2.1); the people freely accessed to forestland to create agricultural land since that time. Traditionally, the villagers cleared forest to create farmland (*Cham Kar*) for the first two or three years, and then they converted cleared lands to be paddy rice fields. This practice is to allow stumps, roots and some tree branches are fragile. In the meantime, the owners usually grow corn or rice and some kinds of vegetables. In doing so, they believe that it is not only easy to dig and create paddy fields, but it is also useful to help the soil become more fertile.

The villagers explained that the method of land clearance to create farmland is generally done by physical laborers through exchange amongst villagers using traditional equipment such as ax, knife and hand operated saw. Generally, if any family in the village wanted land to grow rice, that family could ask for help in clearing land from some villagers who have a good relationship with each other. This pattern had taken turns from one villager to another in the village. The villagers added that for each time of land clearance, there were about 20 to 30 persons who spend one day to clear land, and they could get more or less 0.5 hectare of land. Then, the field owner could extend beyond the cleared field with their own labor, if he/she needed more land for rice cultivation. According to some interviewees, the villagers often try to extend the field year by year until they can grow enough rice for their home consumption.

Currently, the villagers do not have any formal land certificates to secure their agricultural land and to prove how much land they possess. They do not clearly know their rice fields in metric measurements (scientific measurement) because they clear land only according to their labor and how much rice they must grow to satisfy their family consumption levels. However, they could estimate the area of their rice fields through their traditional practice. The villagers expressed that they could estimate their cultivated area through the amount of rice seed they used. They explained that three Tang of rice seed (1 Tang = 24 Kg) can be used for about one hectare of rice field. For example, Mr. Khorn, 47 years old told me that he uses three Tang of rice seed (72 Kg) each year for his three plots of rice field and he affirmed that his rice field is more or less one hectare.

According to the field survey, 74 percent of the O Tanoeng villagers have paddy rice fields, while 26 percent do not have any paddy rice fields (Table 4.6). The reasons why those 26% have no rice fields are: some of them have just formed a new family (just married), some are old and gave the land to their children, and some sold the land to another villager, due to health problems. Although the village was settled there almost 70 years ago, there are no villagers holding more than 4 hectares of agricultural land. Most of them are holding the area of land more or less than one hectare. The villagers who have two or more hectares of rice field and more than 10 cattle are considered as better-off households in the village.

**Table 4.6 Rice Field Holding By Households in the Whole Village**

<b>Area of Rice Field (ha)</b>	<b>No. of Household</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
0	34	26
<1	29	23
≥1	49	38
2	11	8
3	3	2
4	4	3
>4	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey 2008*

Based on the household survey with the selected 30 households, I found that 27 out of 30 households have paddy rice field, occupying about 45.5 hectares of land in total. Amongst the 30 households, 11 households are holding one hectare; 4 households are holding one and a half hectares; 8 households are holding two hectares of rice fields; one household is holding two and a half hectares; 2 households are holding three hectares; and one household is holding four hectares of rice field. The 45.5 hectares of rice fields, which belong to these 27 households, were acquired through five different types of land acquisitions; including 13 households that cleared forest to create farmland by themselves, 7 households that received the land from their older generations, 3 households that purchased the land from another villager, 2 households that received the land from their older generations and additionally purchased from villagers; and 2 households that received the land from their older generations and additionally cleared forest by themselves (Table 47).

Agricultural land has long been considered most important asset of the O Tanoeng villagers as well as rural people in the Cambodia. In the O Tanoeng village, some villagers attempted to clear forests to create rice field by their own labor, some purchased rice fields and some were lucky to have land passed down from their older generations.

**Table 4.7 Paddy Rice Field Acquisitions of Selected Households**

<b>Type of Paddy Rice Field Acquisitions</b>	<b>No. of Households</b>	<b>Area of Rice fields (h)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Cleared Forests by themselves	13	18.5	41
Heritage from their ancestor	7	14	31
Purchase from other villagers	3	5	11
Heritage and Purchase	2	4	9
Heritage and Cleared Forests	2	4	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>45.5</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey 2008*

The rice field acquisition through clearing forests was found to make up 41% of the total rice field land. Generally, those rice fields were taken from forests at different times and contexts. In the case of a 74-year-old original villager, Im Yorn, he revealed that after he married in 1960, his family began to clear forest to create farmland for the new couple. He explained that he, at first, asked some villagers to help his family to cut down trees and he also hired an elephant to pull trees out with pay of one Thang of rice (24 kg) per day. Then, he and his wife continued to expand beyond the cleared land year by year. Finally, his family had about one hectare of land for paddy rice production. During the Pol Pot regime, his farmland was withdrawn by *Ang Kar* (DK administration) to be combined with the collective cultivation. After Pol Pot, in the early 1980s it was cultivated by *Krom Samaki*. Soon after the *Krom Samaki* was broken up, his family reoccupied the land until present time.

Similar to Mr Im Yorn's context, some other original residents began to clear forests to create farmland after they got married and settled a new family, but different forest clearance occurred during different periods of time as some started to clear forests before Pol Pot regime, some after the failure of *Krom Samaki* and some just cleared forests in recent years. However, some other cases were found to be different. For example, Mr Khorn's family acquired about one hectare of farmland in 1991 when they came to settle in this village. Mr. Khorn, 47 years old, reported that before 1991 his family was living and growing rice with his parents in the

neighboring village of Sre Sbov. By 1991, his family had 2 children, thus he and his wife decided to live separately from his parents, because the members of the family increased and it was difficult to live together in the small house of his parents. Since, his family came to settle in the O Tanoeng village, his family began to clear forests to create farmland for his own family. Presently, this family has 7 children relying on one hectare of paddy rice field, fishing, and NTFP.

The rice field acquisition through heritage was found to make up 31% of the total rice field land. Those rice fields were actually taken from forests at different times by older generations who were original residents. Amongst 7 households which were lucky to have rice fields without using their own energy, four households answered that their rice fields were cleared by their great grandparents while the other three households said that their land was cleared by their parents. In the case of a 37-year-old man, Mr. Hut, his eight member family has three hectares of rice fields. That land was passed down from his great grandparents. This family has a better living standard, because they have a rice mill and raise more than 10 pigs, and many cows and buffalos. Another lucky man, Mr Pornng Thean, 26 years old, was born in the village, and he got married with a woman from the same village in 2004. His family was given four hectares of rice fields (two hectares from his side and two from his wife's side).

The rice field acquisition through purchasing was found to make up 11 % of the total rice field land. A few households acquired farmland by purchasing it from some villagers. Households which purchased farmland were found to be new settlers. Mr. Sakhim, a 30-year-old man born in the village, reported that he bought two hectares of rice fields in 2005. He explained that before 2005 his family had been living with his wife's parents. After marriage, he went to live with his wife's side for a couple years until he had two children. By 2005, his family had moved to live separately. Meanwhile, his family bought 2 hectares of rice fields to grow rice for his their own consumption.

Another family, Mr. Saroeun, 43 years old; his family has four children. He said that his family moved from the neighboring commune of Sang Khum, when he was selected to be a clerk for the first mandate of Kbal Damrey commune (2002-2007). Then, his family lived there for about two years, and there was a family that

wanted to sell their farmland. Taking that opportunity, he bought that land, but his family has not cultivated it yet because they do not have enough labor. The land has been rented to a villager in exchange for 15 Thang (360 Kg) of rice per year. Presently, Mr. Saroeun has been doing business by going to buy fermented fish (Brar Hok, Phor Ork) and dry fish from the riverside people to exchange with rice products of the O Tanoeng villagers and others.

The rice field acquisition through heritage and additional clearing of forest and the rice field acquisition through heritage and additional purchase were found to make up the same percentage of rice land (9%). Ms. Phem Sy, a 64-year-old widow pointed out that rice fields are the most important part of food security. She mentioned that soon after Krom Samaki her family reoccupied a rice field given to her by her parents and she used to this land cultivate before the Pol Pot regime. Meanwhile, her family began to clear forests nearby the existing rice field, and continued extending their rice land year by year. Currently, her family has three hectares of rice fields (1 hectare of heritage and 2 hectares from cleared forests). In this case, another household gave a different method of their rice field acquisition. Mrs. Hun Poeun, 50 years old, claimed that her parents passed their one hectare rice field to her family before the Pol Pot regime. That rice field was taken from forests and cultivated since the 1950s by her parents. After Krom Samaki, the land was cultivated every year, but the yield decreased and was not sufficient for her 9-member household. Therefore, in 2002, her family cleared forests on 0.5 hectare of land to additionally create a paddy rice field.

Mr. Poeung, 42 years old, said that his family has two hectare of paddy rice fields that were passed down from his parents. Every year, his family cultivates on that land, and the yields have been enough for his 7-member household. He mentioned that he bought about one more hectare of rice field in 2005, because that field was nearby his rice existing field. In 2005 there was a villager who had about one hectare of rice field nearby his field and wanted to sell it to him, thus he decided to buy it. He simply said that *“to buy land is better than to keep money”*. He added that with that land he could receive more rice products, and in the future he will give it to his children.



#### 4.3.1.2 Paddy Rice Field Cultivation

Rice ecosystem of the O Tanoeng village can be categorized as rain fed farmland. There are two different types of agricultural land and corresponding growing methods in the village. The first type is wet rice, which is growing in flooded paddies and the second one is “upland rice” which is growing on *chamkar*. The word *chamkar* is a Cambodian word that means "garden" or "garden taken from the forest", but generally refers to agricultural land that is not a rice paddy and often implies mixed gardens (Delvert, 1961; Ovesen et al., 1996 cited in Kirkpatrick, 2005). In O Tanoeng village, upland rice is, however, transitorily grown for the first 2 or 3 years after forest clearance (while waiting for stumps and roots to partially decompose) then that area will be converted to be paddy rice fields, because wet rice cultivation is far more productive than upland rice (*rice Chamkar*).

As part of a strategy to reduce risks and to distribute labor, many farmers of O Tanoeng village plant several rice varieties in the same field in separate small plots. Wet rice plantation is classified into three types by its growing period, and each type used different rice seed varieties: (1) heavy rice, with a growing period of approximately six months; (2) medium rice, with a moderate growing period of approximately five months; and (3) light rice, with a short growing period of approximately four months. This arrangement takes place because of labor shortages, so that harvest can be done at different times to spread the labor out. This strategy can overcome environmental risks that may happen as farmers use more than one variety. Traditionally, the people start to grow rice during the early rainy season (usually early June each year), and they start to harvest from November until early December, at the end of the raining season.

In the three types of rice plantation, the villagers use many local rice seed varieties: the light rice varieties are Sen Pidau, Rom Daul and Phal Kun; medium rice varieties are Sleuk Russey, Biey Kurkanlas, Kar Tol/Kan Tol; and heavy rice varieties are Neang Pem, Beiy Kur, Cham Reinphal, Sambok Angkrong. Generally, the farmers use three Tangs of rice seed per hectare of paddy rice field. With three Tangs of rice seeds, the farmers can get a rice harvest, from 50 to 60 sacks (1 sack = 55 Kg.). As the standard rice consumption in Cambodia is 249 kg per person per year (UNDP Human development report 1999/CORRA cited in Country Reports, 2003),

this amount of rice is enough for household consumption. An average household is five people, and some households even have surplus for sale.

Among 30 households that I conducted intensive interviews with, those who have about one hectare of paddy rice field, they could produce about 2,000 kg to 3,000 kg of rice. Those who have more than two hectares of paddy rice field could produce 3,500 kg to 5,000 kg of rice. In the case of my study, I found that 10 households out of the selected 30 households, cultivated on around two hectares of land and they got rice yields from 90 sacks to 100 sacks, more than 4,000kg. More surprisingly, the farmers cultivate rice based on natural rain irrigation alone, and without using any chemical fertilizers. Although rice production is primarily for subsistence, it is also the principal source of cash income for the farmers. Rice traders come from Kratie town to purchase rice at prices comparable to those found elsewhere in the province.

In the O Tanoeng Village, more than 60 percent of the 130 households have a second house at their rice field (rice field-based house). Generally, their rice fields are about two to five kilometers from the village, so the villagers prepare seed and farming tools and food for rice cultivation for a rice cultivation season, usually during the rainy season. Because their rice fields are far from their homes and located in the forest, the villagers build a cottage nearby their rice fields. For those who have their rice fields farther than 2 km from the village, they will stay at the rice field for 8 to 9 months (from late May to early January—a whole rice cultivation period). In doing so, they can save time for working on the rice fields and protect rice plants from domestic cattle and wild animals. Almost all of the farmers stay at their field during the rainy season. They grow some vegetables around their cottages for family consumption such as cucumber, pumpkin, chili, wax melons, and eggplant.

The farmers begin to plough in late May or early June after having heavy rain one or two times. Then, they wait until have enough water (from rain) in the field; they will sow rice for 18 days for light rice and one month for medium and heavy rice. After that, they start to transplant and look after water in the field. All these rice plantation activities quite often take place through labor exchange amongst the villagers, and in some cases hired laborers. Usually, the villagers who do not have

paddy rice fields are hired with the exchange rate from 8,000 to 10,000 Riel or one Tau of rice (12kg) per day.

Exchange labor was very common for the villagers engaging in rice cultivation. In my observation mission, one day I participated in rice harvest for Mr. Hun Yeng's family. Surprisingly, many villagers came as a big group to harvest rice for Mr. Hun Yeng's family. At that time, I found that there were 30 people, both men and women from a different family. Looking to their activities at the time of harvesting rice, they were very happy with doing so. Their hands were harvesting, and they were talking, joking and laughing while helping each other. This culture has been taken turns from one family to another family for the rice production in particular. This practice not only could collect rice products on time, but also kept a good relation amongst the villagers. In the case of Mr. Hun Yeng, his four plots of paddy fields in the same place had a bit more than one hectare completely harvested within only one day. This tradition is telling others of the solidarity of the villagers and the typical life of a rural farming society.

#### **4.3.1.3 Animal Raising**

Livestock and other domestic animal rearing are also important to the O Tanoeng villagers. Most members of the village at the very least raise a few chickens and/or ducks in their yards. This casual form of livestock rearing provides an important source of food for villagers as well as a capital source that can be sold off in times of need. Small animals such as chickens, ducks and pigs are generally fed household food scraps so they are easy to maintain. Villagers who are involved in livelihood activities such as processing of rice - rice milling or rice wine making - often raise pigs as well because the byproducts of these activities, primarily consisting of the germ and broken grains, is usually fed to pigs.

Rice fields and livestock in O Tanoeng Village are inseparable elements of the village ecology. Many villagers raise cow/oxen and buffalos. In this village, there are 370 buffalos and 637 cows and oxen dispersed amongst 84 households (65%) out of 130 households. Most of the 84 households are raising both cows/oxen and buffalos (table 4.8). Practically, those cow/oxen and buffalos have been freely grazed in the rice fields at the beginning of the rainy season and post-harvest, and in

grassland and/or forestland when the rice fields are being cultivated (from June to December).

**Table 4.8 Cattle Raising By O Tanoeng Villagers**

<b>Category</b>	<b>No. of Households</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Non	46	35
Cow/Oxen	12	9
Buffalos	23	18
Both	49	38
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey 2008*

The larger livestock - water buffalo, cows/oxen - are particularly important to those families that have paddy rice field, and are important sources of income generation as well. Traditionally, draft animals--water buffalo and oxen-- have played a crucial role in the preparation of rice fields for cultivation. In O Tanoeng village, the cattle production is directly linked to crop and farming activities. In practice, cattle have been used in agricultural work such as plowing, leveling and transporting. The farmers also use them for handling financial hardship that occasionally happens in their family.

Generally, oxen and buffalos are used for rice cultivation and generation income. However, the farmers prefer to use buffalos rather than oxen for rice cultivation such as plowing, leveling and transporting, because they think that buffalos are stronger than oxen in draft. Therefore cow/oxen are more necessary to generating income. As cows/oxen are used primarily for generating income, we can see that the number of cows/oxen is almost two times the number of buffalos (See in Figure 4.2). For O Tanoeng villagers, they consider “cow/oxen and rice as their bank”. It means that whenever they need money, they do not need to go to the bank as the city dwellers do, but they sell their rice or cows/oxen or buffalos.

In Cambodia today, many city dwellers deposit money (dollar or Riel) in banks, but the O Tanoeng villagers deposit their “rice, cattle=money” in paddy rice field and grassland/forestland. Thus, they are wondering what will happen to them

when grassland and forestland will be cleared and planted with uniform trees by the economic land concession company.

Raising animals is sometime at risk according to the villagers. Many villagers mentioned that it is not only diseases that have often affected their animals, but they have sometime been stolen also. One villager in O Tanoeng villager reported that just from 2007 to early 2008, 16 cattle were stolen during the night time. The villager added that those thieves were not simple; they had a truck to transport cattle from the village. That villager's cattle were stolen two times: the first time in May 2007, 4 buffalos were lost; and the second time in May 2008, 6 buffalos were again lost. During my data collection, this family was raising 1 pig, 25 cows/oxen, 10 buffalos, 20 chickens and 7 ducks.

Besides many cattle being stolen; many of them were also killed by diseases. For example, in O Tonoeung village, 6 buffalos died in early 2008. More seriously, in neighboring villages many buffalos died because of diseases, including 40 head in Cham Horb and 50 head in Sre Sbov. The people very much complained that the local authorities and other related government officials did not handle the issues immediately, and did not take responsibility.

#### **4.3.2 Forest Resources as Source of Villager's Livelihood**

Forests have always been an essential feature in the patterns of life for forest communities and continue to be of fundamental importance, environmentally, socially and economically. The forests are valuable for the people in rural areas, particularly for O Tanoeng villagers as forest dwellers. The village is rich in natural forests that play a crucial role in the villagers' livelihoods. Natural forest resources provide the villagers a means for diversifying their livelihood activities to supplement rice production. Even if they are people with no land, cattle, and few alternative livelihood opportunities, they can collect forest resources for their household's subsistence. In this manner, the forest resource base serves as an essential safety net for the villagers.

In two cases I followed them to hunt, and collect potatoes and crabs and thesis occasions are examples of the reliance the villagers have on forest resources (see pictures in Appendix B).

- In the first case, one day I accompanied a 46-year-old man to hunt in the concession area. This man is a former soldier in the commune, and he was elected to be the deputy chief of the forestry community of O Tanoeung, which has been in the process of legal status application (see Chapter V, section 5.1.3). His family had five children, the oldest daughter was 16 years old and the youngest was about one year old. As his rice field is at the old village (*Chror Phark*), his family moves every year, to temporarily stay at the rice field-based house from late May to January. The man knows the geography of the village's area very well.

His family relies very much on the natural resources in that area. He reported that he often went into the forests to search for wildlife with his three smart dogs<sup>2</sup>, and hunted every wild animal (catching every animal that could be caught). However, the most common were Sva Kdam (*Macaca cynomolgus*) and Tro kourt (*Varanus nebulosus*). This family's livelihood was diverse. Beside rice production as a main activity, this man went fishing, collecting wild vegetables, shooting, trapping, hunting birds and animals. For hunting, this man often went into the forest area which is now in the economic land concession boundary, with his three smart dogs, and using a homemade gun (...a wooden bow with bamboo arrows) to hunt wild animal such as Tro kourt (*Varanus nebulosus*), Chhma Ba (*Lepus cochinsinensis*), Chhlus (*Felie bengalensis*), Sva Kdam (*Macaca cynomolgus*), wild pig (*Canis aureus*) and so forth.

He revealed that these animals could be easily found in the concession forest area during both daytime and nighttime, because that forest is old and thick. It would be better to mention that the concession area was divided into plots, but the forests still stand. He added that these animals could be also found in a deciduous forest area around the villagers' rice fields at nighttime, because they may come out from the evergreen forest area at night to find their food. However, the day that I accompanied him, we secretly entered into the

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<sup>2</sup> They always went into forest in advance their owner and barked different voices when they show different type of animals. When animal was fallen on the ground, they quickly catch.

concession area and stayed from 1.00 pm until 4.20 pm and he could catch only one monkey.

- Another day, I accompanied a 30 year-old-lady, Ms. Chan to seek wild potatoes in the area around the villagers' rice fields, not the concession area. Her family had a one-year-old son. Her family does not have a rice field. Chan is not an original resident, but married a man who was born in the village. Chan was living in another commune of Sambo District, and she married her husband a few years ago. She said that after marriage, her new couple lived with her parents in her homeland for about three years. She mentioned that when she was living at her homeland, she sometime went to collect NTFP for home consumption. By the rice cultivation season of 2007, her family decided to settle in her husband's homeland (O Tanoeng), because her husband already had a house which was passed down from his grandparents. She revealed that her husband's mother is no longer living and his father left him with the grandparents to remarry another woman when he was young. His grandparents have since passed away.

As her family has not had any paddy rice field, she and her husband often go, in the rainy season, to work in rice production for other villagers and each get paid 8.000 Riel per day. Besides working for other villagers in rice production, she sometime goes into the forest with her one-year-old son to seek wild potatoes or rice-field crabs for her household's consumption. Her husband began, in late 2007, to work for an illegal logger as an assistant to the sawmill operator with pay of 10,000 Riel per day.

According to Mrs. Chan as well as some women in the village, there are six types of wild potatoes that can be found in that area, including Dam Long Chheur, Dam Long Teuk, Dam Long Tean, Dam Long Chruk, Dam Long Sorm, and Dam Long Kborng. All kinds of these wild potatoes can be found in deciduous forest around rice fields, about one or two kilometers from the village, and in the evergreen forest area as well.

Rural households living within or near forests typically benefit from forest resources year-round. Forest product collection generally has been practiced year-

round rather than seasonally. However, forest product collection tends to increase during the dry season when most rural households are not busy with rice cultivation and travel is easier. Many households view agriculture as their primary employment and the collection of forest resources as a vital secondary or tertiary occupation.

The O Tanoeng village was found to be highly dependent on forest resources, including timber and poles for construction, fuel-wood, vines, bamboo, thatch, medicinal plants, and wild potatoes and so forth (Table 4.9.). All selected 30 households are engaged in forest products collection. Many of the villagers enter the forest at least three times a month to seek forest products for food or materials. However, some of them enter very often, especially whenever they lack food or they want to eat something from the forest. For instance, when they want to eat potato, Dam Long Kborng, they just enter the forest area to search for it.

Table 4.9 outlines the most common natural resources that the villagers of the selected 30 households often access use. According to them, those common resources could be found both inside the concession area and outside the concession area depending on the type of resources. However, most of them mentioned that they had to be careful going to the concession area. If the concession owner or guards see them, they will not allow them to enter into their area, and they will arrest those who cut down trees. Based on this table, these natural resources can be classified into four main types such as hunting, fishing, cutting timber and collecting non-timber forest products (NTFP).

Some villagers revealed that some people just trap at the night time and search around the local's rice field, while others may go further to the concession area. However, they added that by going to the old forest area (Preah Mei hill), which is now under the concession area, they had more chance to see wildlife than in the nearer area. To collect timber, some villagers said that if they wanted good quality trees for house columns and some other house construction materials, they needed to go the old forest area, because only there could they find good trees. Entering to the concession area has been risky since the company arrival, because they will be arrested if the company sees them cut down trees in their company boundary. For fishing as well as NTFP collecting, they said that some people just go to seek opportunely in the areas inside and outside the concession area.



**Table 4.9 Number of Households access to the Most Common Natural Resources**

<b>Common Natural Resources</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>
gathering firewood	0	30
fishing	9	21
hunting	14	16
cutting bamboo	19	11
plucking hard resin	20	10
searching honey	21	9
searching potato	22	8
searching medicine	23	7
harvesting thatch	24	6
shooting birth	25	5
gathering vine	25	5
plucking flower (orchid)	26	4
Cutting timber (For house construction)	27	3
gathering mushroom	27	3

*Source: Field Survey 2008*

#### **4.3.2.1 Fishing**

In O Tanoeng village, 21 out of the 30 sample households engaged with fishing activities. The major source of fish is O Tanoeng stream and some other creeks (as described in 5.1.1) about two to six kilometers from the current village, and also in paddy rice fields. The methods and tools of fishing that the people often use such as cast net, gill net, fishing outfit (line, pole, hooks) and scatter water out of small pond or tiny pond to collect fishes (the most common in the village).

The villagers reported that during the rainy season they fish almost every day for their daily food as they stay at their rice field. They explained that they often lay fish outfit in rice field or creeks in evening, and they will collect fish in the early morning. In this way, they can catch some fish for daily food. In the dry season, they usually go fishing three or four times a month, each time they can catch approximately five kilograms of fish. The fish catch is generally for home

consumption, shared with close friends and/or sold within the village, which can get for 5,000 Riel a kilogram.

Notably, there is one man who often catches fish with poison. He explained that for the poisoning method he used a wild fruit called “*Lmang*” blend with soil and water, then put it into sack and stirred the sack in water. This method can only be used in the rainy season because *Lmang* fruit can only be found in this season. Each time he used this method he can collect approximately 20 kilograms of fish. He mentions that he practiced this method one or two time(s) per month.

#### **4.3.2.2 Hunting**

Since forests are the habitat of wildlife, the people that hunt and trap wildlife have been implementing common use rights for generations. Some villagers are involved in trapping wildlife, especially wild pigs around their rice fields, while others may seek some wildlife opportunistically in order to supplement consumption and generate income. Wildlife was reported by the key informants and some selected household heads that it has significantly decreased in recent years. They described that before the 1970s wildlife of many types were abundant. Elephants, tigers, wild ox, deer, various types of monkeys and small wild animals reportedly inhabited the forest areas of Kbal Damrey commune.

Since the civil war from the 1970s until the early 1990s, wild animals decreased and continuously decreased, because they were afraid of the guns and bombs and sounds of fighting between Lon Nol and Khmer rouge soldiers in the early 1970s, and between Khmer rouge and the Vietnamese supported government in the 1980s. Furthermore, wildlife has further decreased in number due to the sound of bulldozers and chainsaws that have led to destruction of natural forests. This modern equipment has been brought into the community by illegal loggers and the economic land concession companies.

However, wildlife meat is still a common source for most villagers of O Tanoeng village. There are several small animals still being hunted with traps or homemade spear guns and dogs. According to the interviewees who often enter the forest to search for wild animals, the area nowadays has only small animals such as Tro kourt (*Varanus nebulosus*/monitor lizard), Chhma Ba (*Lepus cochinsinensis*),

Chhlous (musk deer/*Felie bengalensis*), Sva Kdam (*Macaca cynomolgus*/monkey), turtles, civet and wild pig (*Canis aureus*). Wild pigs and musk deer are the two larger animals that are commonly hunted in O Tanoeung as well as Kbal Damrey. Often this wild meat is sold to other villagers or mobile traders (see detail in table 4.10). Smaller animals are hunted or trapped for household consumption, including civets, turtles and other rodents.

**Table 4.10 Price of Wild Animal Meat**

Wild animal Types	Meat Price per Kg. (Riel)
Chruk Prey (Wild Pig)	10,000-15,000
Chhlous (Musk Deer)	10,000-15,000
Tro Hout (Lizard)	20,000- 30,000
Sva (Monkey)	150,000-200,000 (per head, if alive)
Ornn Diek (Turtle)	7,000-10,000
Paus (Snake)	13,000- 20,000

*Source: Field Survey 2008*

Shooting birds is also common for some young villagers. They generally go to search birds in the evening time (at 7 pm to 9pm) when the birds go to their sleeping places and they hunt the birds using a flashlight and slingshot. For instance, one household that I stayed with during my data collection had a son who sometimes went out with his younger brother in the evening time to search for some birds sleeping in trees around the village. A few hours later, they would come back with some birds. Generally, they cooked those birds in different kinds of food to be eaten with cooked rice.

Although hunting by the villagers is common they do not fire guns, and they practically entered the forest to hunt when they were free from their rice cultivation; it was not clear whether this hunting might be at a sustainable level. According to the selected 30 households, all of them were concerned very much about degradation of forest and endangerment of wildlife. They complained that a huge area of forest land, especially old dense forest area, has been bulldozed by a company, and other forested parts of the area have been illegally logged by businessmen, both insiders and

outsiders. They added that all of relevant authorities fail to manage natural resources in the region.

They stated that “*If forests are maintained, firewood will not be lacking*”. This simple phrase implies that whenever, natural forests are still standing, wildlife would not lose. Notably, wildlife habitat has been affected by the tree plantation industries which have been clearing and will completely clear primary forests on a thousand hectares of forestland. Ecological diversity is certainly to be impacted as the forest structure is altered by logging and clearing to plant mono-crop trees for commercial purposes. Some wildlife species have already disappeared from the area and, overall, one can consider that current wildlife populations in the community are threatened by the recent developments.

#### **4.3.2.3 Cutting Timber**

Access to timber started to be restricted in the early 2000s after forest reform was done, but the local people were still able to cut timber for house construction and freely entered the forest area to search for some wildlife. Since the arrival of the land concession companies, the local people have been barred from entering good forest areas. However, three out of the selected 30 households accessed to timber with the purpose of building their house as they are living in a small collapsing house. Hence, they attempted to secretly enter into the land concession area to steal some timber. According to them, many good quality tree species exist in the economic land concession such as So Krom, Neang Naun, Kor Koh, Srer Loav, Khvarv, Pchiek, Por Pel, Rang, Thnaung and so forth.

Of course Timber is another valuable forest product that has long been utilized by the residents of O Tanoeng. Its harvest has become more controversial in the village as well as the commune since the economic land concessions arrived. Many interviewees complained that they were not allowed to cut timber even for the purpose of building a wooden house, and they questioned why the land concession company can cut down trees within a thousand hectares of forestland. Where will they bring those logs to?

I was talking to man who was sawing logs using a hand-operated saw in his small house’s yard. He said that “*It is very hard now to find good quality wood for*

*constructing house, because those good trees can only be found on Chinese land” (the concession area).* He mentioned that before the arrival of the company, he was never concerned about house construction, but now if he does not hurry to find wood to build a house in time, in the future he will not have a wooden house for his family. He added that the log, which he was sawing, was stolen from the land concession area. He explained that he went to the land concession area in the early morning when the concession guards had not come to work yet; He then cut the trees fearful of being arrested by the guards. Then the cut logs were transported by ox-cart at night.

#### **4.3.2.4 Collecting NTFP**

Many villagers depend on forest resources for their daily livelihoods. Non-timber forest products (NTFP) are an important safety net for their lives.

➤ **Firewood:** Every household uses firewood for cooking. Since the area is rich in forests, the villagers reported that firewood is the main source for cooking. Usually, they just go behind their house about a few hundred meters and they can collect enough firewood for cooking. According to some interviewees, the villagers generally collect only dead forest wood to make firewood for home consumption not for sale, and they use approximately 6 to 8 ox-carts per year.

➤ **Bamboo:** According to the interviewees, bamboo can generally be found along or nearby natural creeks. The villagers go to cut bamboo in groups of three or four people and they often spend about three nights or four nights in the forest. A 22 year-old-man reported that he and his three neighbors usually, in the dry season, spend about three nights to cut bamboo, and he mentioned that his group goes to cut bamboo two or three times a month. Within three days, his group can get 700 bamboo trees, and they transport this bamboo to the village by ox or buffalo carts. Each tree can be sold at the cost of 400 Riel to a local merchant or bamboo trader from Kratie town.

According to Mr. Thon, the local merchant, before arrival of the economic land concession bamboo was freely cut, but he now has to pay for that company. This man has a locally-made truck that is able to carry up to 900 bamboo trees; he made this business many years ago. Usually, he hired some villagers to cut bamboo for him

paying them 400 Riel per bamboo tree. He reported that a Chinese man (the company's owner) recently told him through an interpreter that they bought that area of land from the government. Thus, he was not allowed to cut bamboo any more, but if he wants to continue this business he has to pay for them (company).

At the beginning, he was required to pay the company 400 Riel per bamboo. He complained about this to the Kratie governor. Then, the deputy governor, Mr. Thun Kry intervened through negotiating with the company to reduce the price. After that governor's intervention, the company agreed to charge only 200 Riel per bamboo tree from him. Mr. Thon complains that he now has to pay 200 Riel to the company and 400 Riel to the bamboo cutters per one bamboo tree, so he has to pay 600 Riel per one bamboo in total.

This man told me about his trick of transporting bamboo telling the company that his locally-made truck can transport only 600 bamboos per time, thus, he only paid 120,000 Riel per truckload. In fact his truck is able to transport 900 bamboo trees. He can do this, because the company does not go the site and never counts the bamboo trees, but it waits to get money at a toll booth that is along the road. In doing so, he can keep his business alive. However, he presumed that those bamboo forests will be gone, whenever the clearance activities of the company reach there.

➤ **Hard resin:** Hard resin is another NTFP in O Tanoeng village. Some villagers collect hard resin to supplement their income to use in food purchases. Hard resin comes from some kinds of trees that can be found both inside and outside the land concession area. It is usually collected from the ground or some people climb trees to reach it, where it has fallen from the trees and hardened with exposure to the air. It is generally sold to mobile traders that always bring things from the Kratie town to sell in the community every morning.

The 22 year-old-man, who was asked about bamboo cutting above, reported that some poor people in this village including him go to collect hard resin when they needed money to buy some small things or food, especially young people when they want some money to buy something for eating. Collection is very labor intensive and it provides only a very small and extremely variable amount of income. The man added that hard resin collectors can collect from zero to 10 kg per day with 2-3 kg

being the norm. He is the one who used to collect 10 kilograms a day. The resin is sold for about 1500 Riel per kilogram to the mobile traders. According to some of interviewees, finding hard resin is getting more difficult, "It is harder because nearly all of the resin trees have been cut, and logging activity is continuing in the local forests". In the past, the collector could get 10 kg a day, but now the most is 3 kg.

➤ **Orchid Flower:** In the area there are some orchid flowers that naturally grow on some kinds of trees in the forest. These flowers give another opportunity to some villagers to pick for earning income. Like hard resin, the flowers are usually collected from the ground (or some people climb trees to reach it). It is generally sold to mobile traders that always bring things from the Kratie town to sell in the community every morning. According to a 37-year-old man who sometime goes to pluck orchid flowers, one kilogram of flowers is 3,000 Riel. He added that the area does not have much of this flower, but he could pick about 3 to 5 kilogram per day.

➤ **Mushroom:** Like other NTFP, mushrooms can be found in the forest area around the village especially during the rainy season (July and August). Collecting mushrooms is generally done by women. According to a 50-year-old woman whose life depends very much on NTFP, in July or August she sometimes goes to collect mushrooms about three or four kilometers from the village. She often can get about 10 kilograms and these can be sold in the village or to the mobile traders, at a price of 4,000 to 5,000 Reil per kilogram depending on the quality of mushrooms.

➤ **Potato:** Wild potatoes are somehow important for the poor people. The poor villagers enter the forest to search for wild potatoes to eat instead of rice when they lack rice. However, some villagers search for potatoes for snacks at home or at the farm. One day I joined rice harvesting with Mrs. Poeun and many others and we were served boiled wild potatoes with sugar palm while we took a rest after lunch time. The villagers said that those potatoes can be found in the local forests. However, the poor villager like Mrs. Horn, a widow, explained that she often enters the forest to search for wild potatoes for cooking with rice for her diet. This is also similar to Mrs. Chan's case above.

➤ **Thatch:** Thatch is very common for the villagers' house roofing and walling. Some of interviewees said that they go harvest thatch for only a roof or to enclose a wall of their house. Usually, they go to harvest this product whenever they see their house's roof or wall is cracked. Two women, mother and daughter, that I opportunely met on the way back from harvesting thatch to their home were carrying a bunch of thatch on their heads; however, they were friendly and answered some questions that let me know that they often go to harvest thatch whenever they are free from farm work. This practice is the same to some other villagers too. In doing so, they can save thatch little by little to keep for roofing their house when it is cracked.

➤ **Vine:** Vines of several different types are another commonly collected NTFP for the villagers. The vine collection of this village is generally for domestic consumption only, because the market for these products does not presently exist. The vines are spiny, heavy and awkward to carry. The collection vine is therefore considered hard work to the villagers. The villagers collect this product any time they necessarily need to use it in their home or in the communal event.

➤ **Honey:** When I was in the village for the second time of my research, I bought 5 liters of honey from a group of three young men. That time I spent 100,000 Riel for the 5 liters of honey (20,000 Riel per liter). They reported that they go deep into the forest in the concession area, and they stay together there for one night. Over a period of two days they found about ten liters of honey. The group said that their group went to search for honey whenever they need some money to buy something for themselves such as clothes. Honey could be searched for in the dry season only, because bees make their nest not so high and only when there isn't rain. They added that on the way to search for honey, they also catch wild animals if they can.

Honey is one of the important non-timber forest products (NTFP) that people derive from forests in the region, both culturally and economically. Often it is used for food and medicine. Honey provides important cash income, while candles made from bees wax are important in spirit ceremonies and rituals. Honey searchers generally go deeper into the forest—evergreen forest area with a small group of three or four people or as couples. They sometime stay away from their village for up to three days,



relying on hunting, collecting wild vegetables and the small amount of rice that they carry with them for their daily diet .

➤ **Medicine:** Traditional plant-based medicines are occasionally collected and sold by a 56-year-old man in the village. The man reported that there are several medicinal plants that can be found in the area. Usually, he enters the forest to search for medicinal plants whenever the villagers or others need traditional medicine from him. Many villagers know him as a knowledgeable man in compounding medicinal plants to cure some kinds of diseases, especially medicinal plants for helping women who have just given birth maintain good health and rich breast milk for their baby. The man told me that he could make some money from his medicinal knowledge, usually 5,000 Riel for a package of dry mixed medicinal plants.

Some of the 30 household sample reported that medicinal plants are very commonly taken by women after they have given birth. Most women or their spouses/family members collect medicines for them from the forest after childbirth. These plants, at least, are generally still very abundant and common around the villages. However, several people are concerned that these medicinal plants will be harder to find due to the forest degradation.

#### **4.4 Summary**

In this chapter, the O tanoeng village history and its profile were briefly described to explore the study site followed by land utilization of the locals and the villagers' livelihood activities. The village was settled in that region a hundred years ago. In the 1940s, the village moved from the old location about 6 km to the West. This village is the center of Kbal Damrey Commune, Sambo District, Kratie province. The people settled on both sides of National road No. 7, and there are 615 persons within 130 households. The infrastructure and social services are notably poor. It is about 50 Km from Kratie town and located on hard surface good road (Road No.7), but it seems to be a remote area. It has no market place and is poor in terms of educational services, health services and security services.

Land in O Tanoeng village was classified into three kinds according to its use by the local people to support their living condition, including settlement land, farmland and forestland. The pattern of land use of the villagers somehow contributes

to natural resource management in the community. Within this land use pattern, the villagers realized that natural resources have continually decreased. Thus, they attempt to protect natural resources through decentralization policy offered by the government since 2002 by proposing to find ways to protect natural resources in the community.

Traditionally, the people rely on paddy rice cultivation, and raising animals complemented by NTFP collection and hunting for their livelihoods. Most of the villagers are farmers with individually held paddy rice fields of about one hectare on average. Most of the farmers temporarily stay at their rice field during the rainy season, (during rice production) until finishing rice harvest they come to the village. Their paddy rice fields originally were taken from the forest then passed through from one generation to another. However, some rice fields were just cleared forest to create after Pol Pot regime.

Besides rice cultivation, many households raise domestic animals and cattle (chickens, ducks, pigs, oxen cow and buffalos). The cattle raising is not only for labor use in rice production and transportation, but also for a main source of income generation. As the village is a rich common property resource of forest that plays a crucial role in the villagers' livelihood, most of villagers diversify their livelihood activities through collecting natural forest products, hunting and fishing. Some villagers with no rice field, cattle and few alternative livelihood opportunities, can collect forest resources for their household's subsistence. This demonstrates that forests have been an essential feature in the patterns of life for them and continue to be of fundamental importance, environmentally, socially and economically.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **THE LOCAL LIVELIHOODS AND FOREST RESOURCES UNDER THREAT**

#### **5.1 Forestry Community Initiative within Decentralization Framework**

##### **5.1.1 Development Plan of Kbal Damrey Commune**

Before the 2002 commune election, Kbal Damrey Commune was considered as a remote area not only because of the geography itself, but also in terms of development. Even though it is just 55 km from the Kratie provincial town, it seems far from central government and other development agencies. It had very poor infrastructure and social services. As it is a forested area, the people have been depending very much on rice plantations and natural resources for many generations. By February 2002, the first commune election, which has never happened in Cambodia, was held nationwide, and the elected commune councils became key actors in the implementation of decentralization policy at the local level.

Following this commune election, the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Planning jointly issued an instruction in April, 2002, known as the inter-ministerial declaration (*Prakas*) to implement the Commune Development Planning (CDP) model and form a Five-Year Development Plan (2003-2007), and three-year rolling Commune Investment Plan (CIP) (2003-2005). Like other communes in the Kingdom, Kbal Dmrey commune, following the inter ministerial instruction, began to implement the planning process (See Chapter III) to set up the first five-year CDP and three-year rolling CIP with the intention of supporting the poverty reduction strategy of the government.

The CDP and CIP were completely done on 22 February 2003 and formally recognized by the Kratie provincial governor on 17 March 2003 (Kbal Damrey Commune CDP, 2003-2007). The CDP and CIP have been categorized into five sectors including economic, social, administration and security, natural resources and environment, and gender. The commune set up a broad vision, goal and strategy in implementing the first five-year CDP in the commune development framework:

**Vision:** “Lead and manage the commune within democratic framework, opening for participation from all sectors including local people, civil society, private, and government in the commune development. The commune commits to develop the community with transparency, accountability, and effectiveness in order to improve the local living standard”. Following this broad vision, the goal and strategy for each sector was also broadly set up as follow:

<b>Goals</b>	<b>Strategies</b>
<b>1. Economic</b>	
To increase agricultural products in order to generate income, ensure food security and improve living standard of the people in community	-Increasing agricultural product and animal raising in each household - Creating household’s occupations -Improving and setting roads, bridges, and irrigations system
<b>2. Social affair</b>	
To improve social welfare and human resource through education, training, and health care services.	-Promoting sanitation and health care -Promoting education -Promoting good communication
<b>3. Natural Resources and Environment</b>	
To protect natural resources and environment in order to benefit for the local people.	-Preventing destruction forests and illegally forestland clearance -Promoting tree plantations
<b>4. Administration and security</b>	
To have communication between local people and authorities and to keep social order and security in the community	- Making a good communication services for the local people - To ensure the security in the community
<b>5. Gender</b>	
To promote understanding on gender equity and to reduce domestic violence	-Reducing domestic violence -Promoting equity between man and woman and promoting family planning

Amongst others, forest resources protection was requested by villagers and approved by the Commune Councils (CC) and Planning and Budget Committees (PBC) from all five villages to be a high priority project for the first five-year development plan of the commune. Since the project was prioritized at the village and commune levels, the project was brought to the District Integrated Workshop (DIW) and received service support from the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery and got a training course on environmental law from Department of Environment of Kratie province for all five villages of the commune (Kbal Damrey Commune CDP, 2003 and CIP, 2003-2005).

By 2004, the project again appeared in CIP 2004-2006 as a high priority project and brought to DIW. The Kratie Provincial Department of Environment supported the project with a propagated training course on the importance of natural resources and environmental management (Kbal Damrey Commune CIP, 2004-2006). By 2005, the project again appeared in CIP 2005-2007 as high priority project and brought to DIW, the project was supported by a local NGO, Community Economic Development (CED) to create three forestry communities in the commune. The O Tanoeng forestry community was one amongst those three (Kbal Damrey Commune CIP, 2005-2007).

### **5.1.2 The O Tanoeng Forestry Community Initiative**

According to the group discussion, in the 1980s, forest resources were considered to be 100%; the result of the discussion is briefly summarized in the table below (table 5.1). After the failure of the Khmer rouge, there were not many households in the community, estimated at about 40 households (see in Chapter IV, section 4.1.2.1). Paddy-field rice production was the primary livelihood for the local people. Those people worked under collective action (*Krom Samaki*) and they shared rice amongst their group. At that time this area was still under pressure of fighting between PRK's force and rebels. Hence, there were not any wood trading activities (no wood trading, no logging). Of course, the villagers needed some construction materials and land for rice plantations, but the people could only clear bush forests or an area where not many big trees existed and cut some trees to build small houses by using traditional equipment such axes, knives and hand operated saws, etc.

**Table 5.1 Trend of forest resource change and its reasons**

<b>Decade</b>	<b>Forest quantity Percentage (%)</b>	<b>Reasons</b>
<b>1980s</b>	100	-Small population -No wood traders (Absent of wood market) -No illegal logging -Insecurity (in the war time)
<b>1990s</b>	70	-Population increase (need more farmland and woods for house construction) -Wood traders (market demand) -Presence of Chainsaws (few) -Illegal logging (using chainsaw and involved powerful and rich people )
<b>Present</b>	20	-Present of economic land Concession companies -Wood traders (More market demand) -Presence of chainsaws (many) -Illegal logging (using chainsaw and involved by powerful and rich people)
<b>Future</b>	• Decrease to zero	-If not take any action against illegal logging -remaining many ELCs
	• Increase (regenerate)	-If take actions against to illegal logging to stop all illegal logging activities, withdraw all modern equipments, and create community forestry

Based on the group discussion, the population began to increase during the second half of the 1980s and 1990s through increasing marriage of young men and women in the village and newborn babies, and some people from neighboring villages settled in this village. Therefore, some of the new families needed land for rice plantations for their family consumption. The new family also needed a new house, although not a big and modern house. By the mid 1990s, logging activities were increased due to the demand of elite people, especially the people in the towns and cities. Remarkably, log trading was very active during this time because the

government had implemented forestry management through the forestry concession system. As I mentioned in Chapter I, the government granted million of hectares of forestland to private companies around the country; and Kratie alone, the forestry concessions covered over 702,642 hectares of forestland. Since the demand of wood production and wood trading increased in the community, there were reportedly two or three kinds of modern tree-cutting equipment such as chainsaws (the locals call *Transaner*), and tray machines for plywood production.

Presently, the forest is dramatically decreased due to the presence of economic land concession companies and more active illegal logging. All of the evergreen and semi-evergreen forest areas are under those land concessions. Those forests will be cleared to plant commercial trees (teak tree=*Tectona Grandis*). Besides the concession areas, the forest is less than about 20%, but those are just deciduous forests, adjacent to rice fields of the villagers. Although the 20% of forest is not made up of good quality trees, they are threatened under illegal logging. Presently, there are about 30 of the villagers involved with illegal logging because they thought that the forests will no longer exist in their community since authorities do not pay attention to such issues, and companies are continuing to occupy all good forests and land.

Through everyday practice of utilization of the forest resources for their livelihoods, the O Tanoeng Villagers realized that the resources and wildlife have continually decreased in their region. The villagers complained about this and the lack of capacity of local authorities and relevant actors such as forestry and environment officials in natural resource and environment management. Some villagers revealed that since the early 2000s, illegal logging from both insiders and outsiders and over hunting by some local villagers, were spread in the community. This problem became more and more serious when the national road was rehabilitated from 2004-2007.

The natural resource destruction was due to market demand, transportation improvements and corruption of some relevant officials. Some villagers pointed that logging activities were more active when the road began to rehabilitate, and they guessed the people in the lower part of the country really needed wood products. They illustrated that they had not seen the relevant authorities take any actions against illegal activities. Instead, some of them were involved with illegal loggers, wood traders, and wildlife traders through receiving bribes and being the backbone for those

who pay them bribes. Furthermore, a thousand hectares of forest lands have been occupied by private companies under the label of economic development through intensifying agro-industrial production objective of the government, known as economic land concessions.

Concerning the natural resources loss that will affect on their livelihoods, most of villagers took opportunity provided them with “participation” in making the first five-year CDP 2003-2007 and three year rolling CIP 2003-2005. Through CDP and CIP planning process (in phase one, step two of CDP/CIP planning Process), the villagers propose to protect forest resource in the community. However, the project got support from only the relevant provincial department training courses as mentioned above (in section 5.1.1).

The training courses were criticized because they were prepared for only the powerless groups. The local natural resource reliance group, who was very much concerned about destruction of natural resources, was collected to sit in order to listen to propagation on environmental law or other related regulations; but those who were involved in the forest destruction such as forestry officials, policemen, soldiers, wood traders, wildlife traders were never ever invited to the training courses. Of course, these officials have not been directly involved in forest resource destruction, but they are indirectly involved through using their power to be a backbone for those illegal loggers and traders by taking bribes. Within such a context, the illegal practitioners used their money to tie a close relationship with those related officials and to hire some poor people to cut trees and/or hunt wildlife for them.

However, most of O Tanoeng villagers realized that the local natural resources notably became rare. They presumed that the forest resources will be continually decreased, if such a situation keeps continuing. Therefore, they have been raising their voices again and again since 2003 until present through the rolling CIP process in order to put the forest resources under control of the local community. In this context, it could be examined that the CDP and CIP processes were designed in a way to allow grass roots people to gain power in community development and natural resource management through their participation in the process. However, this power is easily lost if it lacks the support and willingness from government agencies.



Through the local community's participation in the CDP and CIP process, the forest resource protection initiative was democratically prioritized and brought to DIW every year since 2003. By 2005, the forest protection initiative received technical support from a local NGO, Community Economic Development (CED) to create community forestry in the O Tanoeng village. The NGO expected that the local people would have power in natural resource management. By February 2006, the Natural Resource and Environment Management (NREM) project of the Seila program gave financial support to the commune to implement the community forestry project in the commune, particularly in the O Tanoeng village. The fund was allocated to the commune budget through an annual development budget of the commune for 2006 with the approval signature from the provincial governor and a chairman of PRDC on 13 April 2006 (Community Forestry Project Document, 2006).

Within the technical support from NGO-CED and financial support from NREM project, the commune councils (CC), O Tanoeng's Planning and Budget Committee (PBC), CED's officer and Forestry officials discussed and agreed to create community forestry<sup>1</sup> in O Tanoeng village with the purpose of managing natural forests in a sustainable way (Community Forestry Project Document, 2006). Following this agreement, CC, all village Heads, PBC, the Commune clerk, and the District Facilitator Team (DFT) had a meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2006 to identify the potential area for creating community forestry. The meeting decided to select an evergreen forest area of *Preah Mei* hill to be the community forest area of the O Tanoeng community (meeting minute on 6<sup>th</sup> Feb 2006).

Immediately following the agreement, a set of action plans for creating community forestry was set up under technical support from CED. However, the project implementation has been facing failure due to the arrival of Economic Land Concession Company, Global Agricultural Development (Cambodia) Co.; Ltd (see in 5.2). Even though the central government granted forestland where one has been initiated to establish community forestry by local community through CDP and CIP process, CED has kept continuing its support to the local community to gain legal status from the government for the community forestry until now. However, the

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<sup>1</sup> Agreement on Establishment of CF was described in "strategic paper" signed and stamped on 30/03/2006 by Kbal Damrey Commune Chief, for implementation of CF Establishment.

process to gain lawful status for this community forestry is likely obstructed at the provincial level.

### **5.1.3 Challenges of CED in the Establishment of Community Forestry**

CED, a local NGO was established on 19 November 1998 by three local people who live in Chhlong District, Kratie Province. This organization was registered with the Ministry of Interior on 27 August 2000, and it was authorized to implement its development activities in the whole Kingdom through permission letter No. 326 scN, dated on 29 March 2001 (CED, Strategic Plan 2008-2010).

Based on lawful status, CED works at two different levels: First, the operational level is to empower local communities through establishment of community-based organization (CBO) and strengthen community capacity in order to manage natural resources and development. The capacity building for local communities has generally been done by providing training courses that mainly focus on human rights, forestry law, land law, leadership, development management and so forth. And second, co-operational level is to cooperate with governmental organizations, NGOs and other stakeholders, and to create a network in order to support CBO to gain legal status and be able to advocate with other powerful actors.

Today, CED sets up four main projects, including Natural Resource management, Indigenous Development, Multiple Sectoral Development and Gender projects. These projects have been implemented within 75 villages in Chhlong, Kratie, Snoul, and Sambo district of Kratie province; and Dom Ber and Mei Mout of Kampong Cham Province. These projects aim to give opportunities and strengthen capacity for vulnerable groups, poor people, and indigenous people to be able to challenge any problems faced. In particular, food security issues are the most important and CED always tries to support the grass roots groups to gain rights to participating in local natural resource management and benefit from those natural resources for their livelihoods (CED, Strategic Plan 2008-2010).

CED does not have a personal budget for running any projects. To implement development activities, CED seeks opportunities for financial support from some international organizations, through writing proposals to raise some funds to implement its projects, such as Oxfam, SADP, EWMI, IFAD, FAO, EU, UNDP,

NGO Forum, CFI, WB, ABD, New Zealand's International Aid & development Agency (NZAID in Thailand focus on land and forest issues), and the Canadian Cooperation Office (CCO) (CED, Strategic Plan 2008-2010).

O Tanoeng Village is one amongst 75 villages of its development target. CED provided technical support to the villagers in creating Community Forestry in order to properly manage natural resources for the local livelihoods. Although the economic land concession was already present, CED continued to negotiate with the local authorities and provincial authorities to push up implementation of the agreement that was done in February 2006. As a result, the Memorandum of Understanding between CED and the Local authority of Kbal Damrey on the community forestry establishment for O Tanoeng village was prepared and signed on 17 August 2006 with formal recognition from the provincial governor of Kratie province on 31 August 2006.

The Community Forestry Committee of five members was elected in September 2006 by the O Tanoeng Villagers. After the election, the committee and 33 other villagers who were representative of O Tanoeng villagers with technical support from CED completely demarcated boundary of Community Forestry by using GPS tools on 20 December 2006 (Figure 5.1). The boundary of the forestry community initiative was demarcated on the coordinates as follows:

X: 618000 – Y: 142600      X: 618000-Y: 141800  
 X: 626000- Y141800      X: 626000-Y: 142600

CED's Director explained that in order to get full legal status, the community needs to apply for legal recognition from the provincial governor and forestry cantonment of Kratie province. Within this institutional process, CED helped the committee to prepare documents to apply for lawful recognition. A request letter attaching with map of community forestry area and thumb print of villagers was given to the provincial governor through a bottom-up approach. That letter requesting community forestry creation was approved by the village head on 16 May 2007, by the Commune Head on 17 May 2007 and by the Sambo district governor on 22 May 2007. However, the director said that the legal status application for community forestry moved slowly at the provincial level both with the governor and the forestry cantonment.

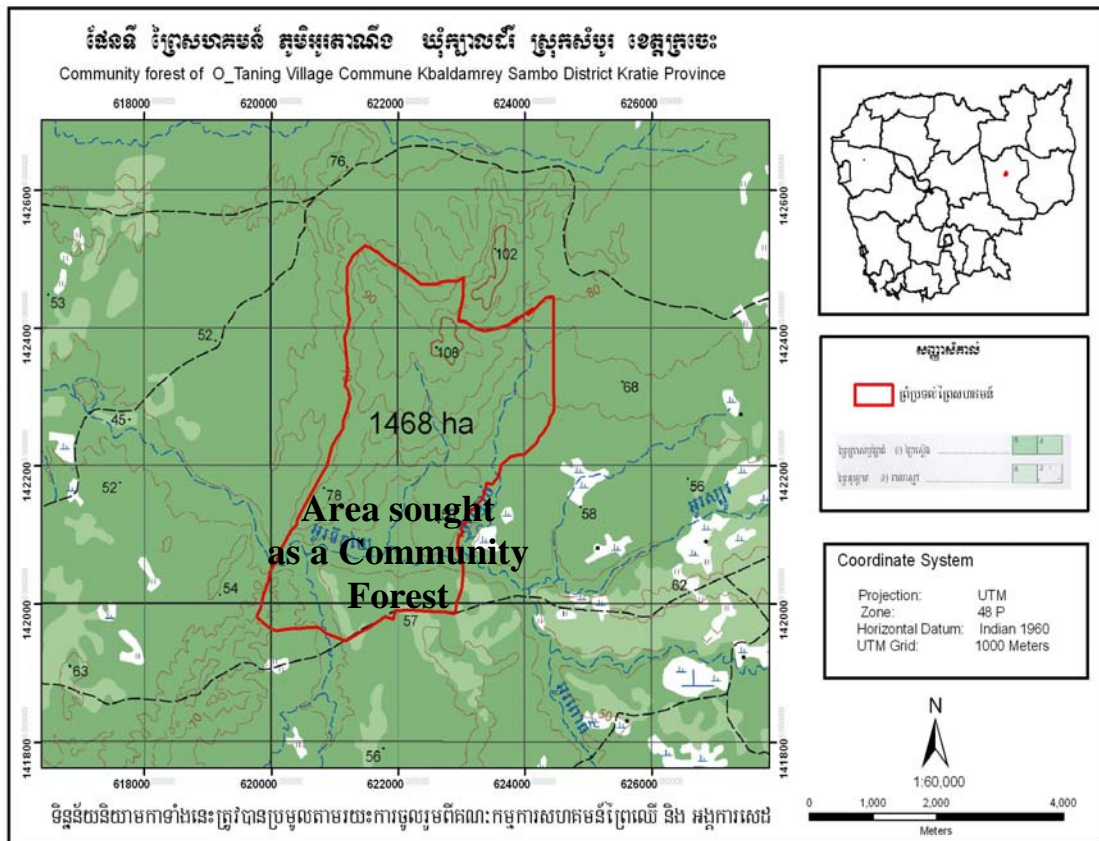


Figure 5.1 Location Map of O Tanoeng Forestry Community  
 Source: Community Economic Development Organization (CED)

Even though the legal status application was obstructed, CED kept negotiating with the provincial governor and forestry cantonment on behalf of O Tanoeng villagers. According to the CED Director, the application was moved further under CED commitment. The director revealed the application was approved by the related provincial authorities, and it was listed and attached with the requested letter for full delegation of power of forestry cantonment and sent to MAFF-Administration Forestry on February 2008 in order to approve the legal status to the community forestry. About 5 months later, in June, MAFF-Administration Forestry sent back a letter to order the forestry cantonment of Kratie to review any area where local communities have conflicts with ELC companies.

According to the CED Director, the forestry cantonment cut out all requested community forests which have conflicts with ELC companies without conducting any study on conflicting communities and again wrote a letter to request for full delegation of power to approve the requested community forest where there were not any conflicts. The director mentioned that Kratie forestry cantonment told CED and O

Tanoeng community that they will conduct a study to request community forestry of O Tanoeng and prepare a document to again proceed to MAFF-Administration Forestry later.

However, the director presumed that O Tanoeng community forestry as well as others would not be possible to receive full legal status because the forestry cantonment official did not mention any possible time for reviewing the O Tanoeng community forestry. In this scene, CED could not disagree with the forestry cantonment, because it not only assists the O Tanoeng community, but it also assists other communities in creating the community forestry. In other words, CED does not have any power to force the government officials as powerful actors. In addition, CED provides assistance to the local communities based on financial support from some international organizations which generally provide a limited fund with some conditions such as deadline, progressive report and so forth, and want to see successful results. In this sense, it was no matter for CED to dropping out the O Tanoeng community from the list by forestry cantonment, because there were some other communities under its assistance needed to gain legal status. In doing so, CED will get some successful results on time to prove its donor even though one or two communities have been facing failure. Ultimately, the ones who lose are the forest dwellers of O Tanoeng.

## **5.2 Arrival of Economic Land Concession Companies in Local Community**

### **5.2.1 Statistic of Land Concessions in Kratie Province**

In Kratie province, there are many economic land concession companies that have been granted forestland by both national and provincial government. According to the local newspaper, published on 10 February 2008; Kratie province reportedly has ten economic land concession companies. These ten were reported in more detail by the director of the provincial department of agriculture in the local newspaper. Mr. Kuy Huot, Director of the Kratie Provincial Department of Agriculture told the local newspapers that more than 70,000 hectares of this province's area had been granted to ten companies in the name of economic land concession for commercial tree plantations including teak, rubber, cassava, and other fast growing trees.

Amongst those ten companies, 6 companies are in Sambo District, 3 Companies are in Snoul district, and 1 company is in Kratie district. The six companies in Sambo district and one in Snoul sistrict, covering 65,559 hectares of land are the companies, which received authorization to invest from the national government. However, the director did not mention about some companies that invest on land less that 1,000 hectares, which received authorization to invest from provincial level. According to the website of MAFF, updated in November 2008 on overview on economic land concessions; there are other 20 companies that do not individually exceed 1,000 hectares that have been granted forestland by the Kratie provincial authority. Those 20 companies have not been provided more detail information in the website.

For the ten companies mentioned by the director, Kuy Huot in the newspaper, most of them have not notably done anything according to the contracts made with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. Remarkably, the companies have just leveled the ground, cut down trees, build company roads and some infrastructure within their companies. In this matter, the director explained that the delay of these companies is due the fact that they have been waiting for their master plans to be approved by the MAFF. He emphasized that the companies that received these land concessions have to plan and study the socio-economic and environmental impact in advance. Besides that, the MAFF and provincial authorities have to ensure that the companies' investments will achieve good results and will not have negative effects.

However, the newspaper revealed that some of these companies did not properly follow the government's policy. Those companies only want to occupy the land and forests in order to gain benefit for their own companies (Raksmei Kampuhea, Vol.16, #4512, 10 Feb 2008). More seriously, most of those companies with both less than and more than 1,000 hectares of land have conflicts with the residents because they encroach upon the local people's farmland and destroy their livelihood sources.

Kratie Province is categorized as upland rural and the forested province occupies an area of 11,094 square kilometers equivalence 1,109,400 hectares. 83.5 percent of the provincial area is forestland, equivalent to about 926,349 hectares. In this province, up to early 2008, there were ten economic land concessions, covering

more than 70,000 hectares, and in late 2008, other 20 companies individually occupying less than 1,000 hectares of land area were also reported. These ELC should be questioned whether they have been granted “*degraded forest area or degraded land*” as the government claimed. Another question is that what will happen to the natural forest, wildlife and people in this region, when all those companies completely clear natural forests for their businesses.

As I mentioned in Chapter I, more than 700,000 hectares of forestland of this province used to be under forest concession companies and some of these companies probably remain their activities. Therefore, these economic land concessions can be seen as a “loophole” for continuing forest exploitation after forest concessions tightened like what Mc Kenney and Tola (2002) mention. This quantity of economic land concession companies plus a social land concession covering more than 4,000 hectares of forestland in this forested province could result with natural forest resources and wildlife no longer existing. In this province, if the commercial plantations will actually be planted, there will be nice scenery of uniform trees, but natural forests and wildlife will not be found in the area.

### **5.2.2 Beyond Chinese Aids to Rehabilitation the National Road No.7**

National Road No. 7 in northeastern Cambodia finally opened, after over three years of rehabilitation work by the Shanghai Construction Group of China and evaluated construction techniques of the China Railway No.3 Survey and Design Institute. The 186.648-km-long road is the last part of the National Road No. 7, running through Kratie and Stung Treng provinces and directly leading to Laos, and it was reconstructed to be like new. The first part of the road from Skun to Kampong Cham to Thnol Torteng and Kizona Bridge across the Mekong River was rehabilitated and built with a Japanese grant, and the second part from Thnol Torteng to Kratie Provincial Town was rehabilitated through an ADB Loan (Prime Minister Hun Sen’s speech on 29 April 2008).

The restoration of the last part of National Road No. 7 started on Nov. 8, 2004. The road has 222 drainage pipes, 12 small and medium bridges, including the 1,057-meter-long Cambodia-China Friendship Bridge over the Sekong River near the border with Laos. This restoration was expended to cost about US\$ 70 Million, including a

US\$ 65 Million interest-free loan from the Chinese government and US\$ 4.3 Million contributed from the Cambodian government (PM's speech on 29 April 2008). Cambodia always considers the People's Republic of China (PRC) as one of the close friends that has provided a lot of support not only for rehabilitation and infrastructure but the PRC has also encouraged their investors to invest in industrial, agricultural and tourism sectors in Cambodia. It is believed that this has helped to push economic growth and generate employment for Cambodian citizen, thereby contributing to poverty alleviation in Cambodia.

The Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen told the inauguration ceremony on 29 April 2008 at the end of the road in Steng Treng Province that "it is the latest achievement during the 50 years of diplomatic relations between China and Cambodia.". It should be reminded that the diplomatic relations between the two countries was established since 19 July 1958. The Prime Minister delivered a message in the ceremony with hundreds of officials and local residents that the rehabilitation of the national road No.7 will help the economic development of northeastern provinces including Kratie, Steng Treng, Ratanakiri and Mondulkiri.

The last section of National Road No. 7 is called the "Dragon's Tail", which begins with the head at the sea port of Sihanouk province connected with the National Road No. 4 along the sea coastline passing through Phnom Penh and the body crossed the National Road No. 6A connecting to the National Road No. 7. This "dragon manner" had been strongly believed that it is a breath and important veins for the Cambodian economy. It links southwest and northeast, which are the areas with economic potentials and provides important benefits for national and regional trade, in particular for cooperation among the three countries of Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. The government claimed that when the "Dragon Tail" is connected, the "Dragon" will revitalize and be empowered to increase the pace of economic growth and enhance living standards of Cambodian people to free them from poverty and improve welfare.

The Cambodia government emphasized that the areas where this "Dragon" is passing through are the main economic areas of Cambodia including industry, agriculture and tourism. This national road will be used for traveling, transporting products of people in the North-East. The areas which are endowed with large areas of high quality rubber plantations at international standards, potato plantations,



soybean and sesame fields, cotton plantations and many others, in particular some other plants that can only grow in cold regions such as butter trees, grapes, tea and coffee. In addition, this region is the area for eco-tourism that has nice scenery, mountain surroundings and waterfalls as well as fresh water dolphins in Preak Kompy in Kratie province that attract national and international tourists.

Moreover, this section of the National Road No. 7 has added value in that it will serve for the triangular development and cooperation of provinces of three countries - Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam - as this road is a potential crossing bridge for land transportation of goods for these countries. This road is also the ASEAN highway project No. 11, which connects cities from Kunming, China crossing through Vietnam, Laos, Phnom Penh city towards international sea via Sihanouk provincial port, passing the National Road No. 4 or Cambodian railroad. At the same time, Cambodia can exchange products and goods within the areas around the National Road No. 7, including products from Rattanakiri, Mondulakiri, Kratie and Stung Treng provinces as well as products from Laos, and Vietnam to Thailand by railroad from Phnom Penh to Poi Pet. Therefore, this national road will greatly contribute to effective and rapid integration of Cambodia into the region and world.

Following this road restoration; Mr. Sun Chanthol, former Minister of Public Works and Transportation informed, while attending the inauguration ceremony of the national road, that China has donated 600,000 U.S. dollars for Cambodia to clean the mines and unexploded ordnances along National Road No. 7 from Kratie province to Stung Treng province. The Minister mentioned that "The finance has helped the people avoid risking their lives," and added that the road can help improve the people's living conditions and expand the tourism areas in the eastern provinces, where a lot of natural views of forestry, mountain ranges, lakes, waterfalls and tribal culture can be seen.

However, the government did not inform the local people about how much forestland was granted to private companies, in particular Chinese companies, for 70 years of exploitation, along this "Dragon Tail". According to MAFF's formal source, there are 14 economic land concession companies who were, during the time of the road construction, 2005-2006; centrally granted over 132,809 hectares of land in Kratie and Steng Treng provinces. Amongst those companies, nine companies are

Chinese companies (6 companies in Kratie and 3 Companies in Steng Treng) covering 80,667 hectares; four companies are Cambodian, in Steng Treng, covering 44,582 hectares; and one Vietnamese company, in Kratie, covering 7,560 hectares of forestland (See in Appendix A).

This statistic is not included three existing Cambodian companies which are covering 118,169 hectares of forestland that came in this region before the road restoration, and some companies, which were authorized to invest in agro-industry individually with less than 1,000 hectares of land granted by the provincial level. Of course, the government may happily expect to benefit from those economic land concession companies, but it ignores the problems that have been occurring with local livelihoods since arrival of those companies. With the presence of those private companies, the characteristics of the nature that the minister mentioned “*the natural view of forestry, mountain range, lakes, waterfalls and tribal culture can be seen*” will not remain.

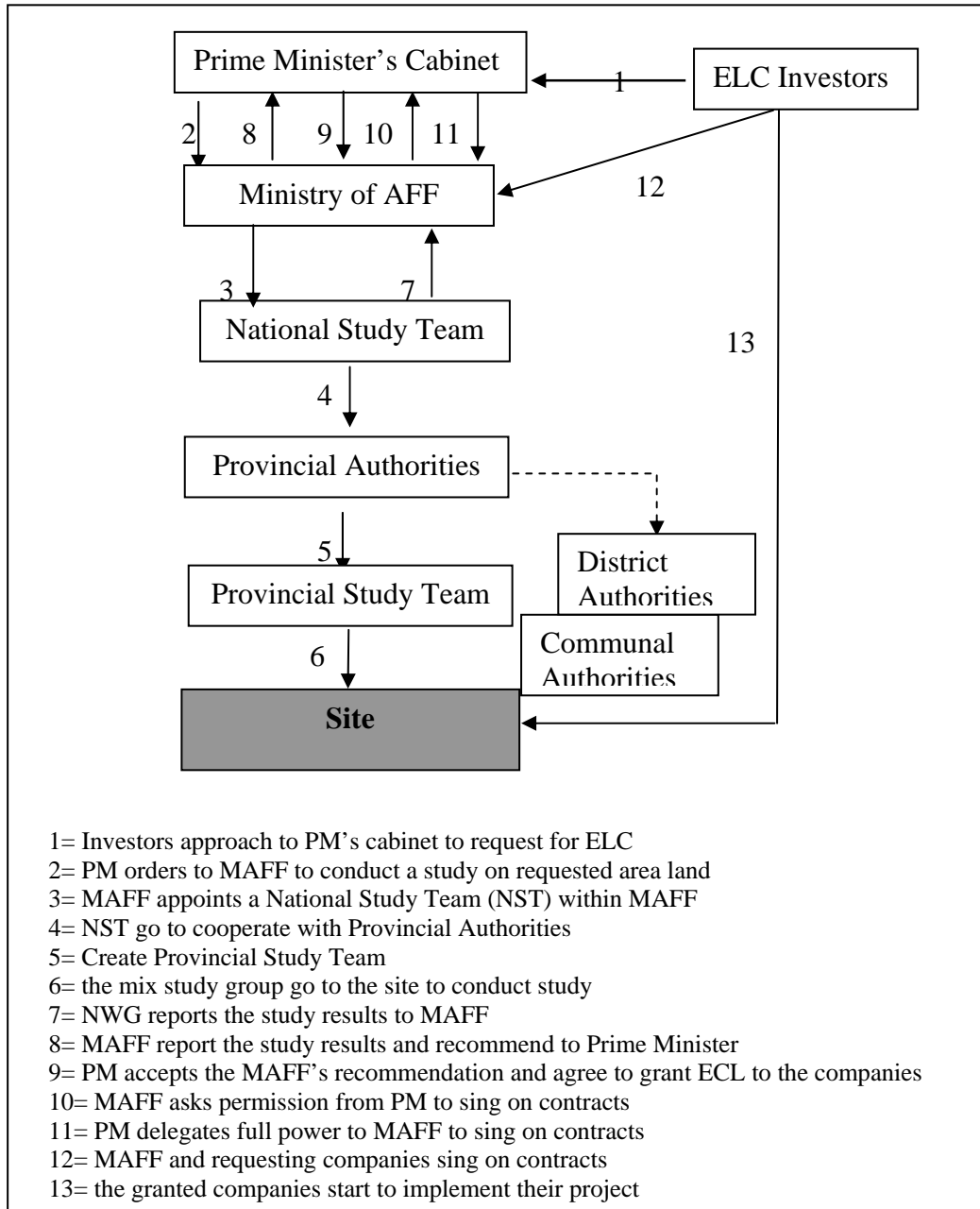
### **5.2.3 Authorization to invest in Economic Land concession**

The authorization to invest in commercial tree plantations is generally done through a top-down approach. The investment, which is more than 1,000 hectares of land, is authorized by the national government, while; the investment which is less than 1,000 hectares is authorized by the provincial government. Both levels always grant economic land concessions to private companies without local consultation. In here, I would like to describe the process of the central government’s authorization to invest in commercial tree plantations to three Chinese investors that can be shown the process of granting economic land concessions in Cambodia in general. The process is briefly explained as follows:

International investors, who are interested in economic land concessions, first approach the Cabinet of the Prime Minister in order to seek an opportunity to invest in agro industry (Figure 5.2). For example, three Chinese companies that were mentioned in section 5.2 approached the Cabinet of Prime Minister, then through their negotiation; the Prime Minister issued three letters No. 1531, No.1530, No.1529 ្រ/ 05 dated on 22 December 2005 (the same date) to the Minister of MAFF to order the MAFF to conduct a study on the requested areas of three companies covering 30,000

hectares of land. Each company requested 10,000 hectares of land and to give comment to the Prime Minister.

**Flowchart of authorization to invest in Commercial Tree Plantations**



**Figure 5.2 Process of Authorization to invest on ELC**

Immediately following the Prime Minister's letter, the minister of MAFF formed and sent a "national study team" (working group) of five officials to Kratie province to conduct a study on requested land areas though a mission letter No. 103

ကနဦး, dated on 06 January 2006. The five officials were from related departments of the MAFF including an office deputy and an official of Planning and Statistics Department, an office deputy of Agronomy and Agricultural Land Improvement Department, and an official deputy of Watershed and Forestland Management and an official of Forestry Administration.

The working group had a meeting on 09 January 2006 with the Kratie governor and other related provincial departments including the Director of the Environment Department, the Director of the Land Management Department, the Deputy Director of the Agriculture Department, the General Secretary of the Provincial Office, Deputy Director of the Governor Cabinet and the Deputy Director of the Kratie Forestry Cantonment. The meeting was finalized by forming a “provincial study team” and mixing with the national study team to review the requested areas at the sites. On the same day of the meeting, the provincial governor issued an order letter to set up a provincial working group in order to support the national working group.

The members of the provincial working group were from the related departments above. A day after, these two working mixed together and divided into two groups that went to the requested areas to study the forest situation, landscape, soil quality and local land use. These two mixed working groups completed their mission of study on 30,000 hectares of the requested areas within 3 days (10-12 January 2006). Then, the study result attached with maps of locations to be granted to those three companies was reported to the Minister of MAFF. Within a few days, the mixed working group did not only completely review and evaluate the impacts of requested land on local people, but they also collected approval signatures from all relevant local authorities (See in Figure 5.5).

Based on this working group’s report, the minister of MAFF reported and recommended to Prime Minister through letter No. 466 ကနဦး, dated on 31 January 2006 that the land areas that were available to grant to three commercial tree plantations are:

- 9,800 hectares for the Global Agriculture Development Company Co. LTD.
- 10,000 hectares for the Asia World Agricultural Development Co. Ltd; and

- 10,000 hectares for the Green Island Agricultural Development Co Ltd

Responding to the report and recommendation letter of MAFF, the P M's cabinet issued a letter No. 227 សម្រេច, dated on 9 February 2006 to accept and agree with the MAFF's recommendation. Following this letter, the minister of MAFF wrote a letter No.688 ksk, dated 10 February 2006 to PM to request full delegation of power for signing on the ELC contracts with those companies. Finally, the PM issued a letter No. 15 សម្រេច, dated on 17 February 2006 to delegate full power to the Minister of MAFF to sign on contacts between government and the companies. Following the full delegation of power from PM, the Minister of MAFF and three of the recipient companies signed the contracts on 15 March 2006. After these contracts were signed, the companies began their project in May 2006. Through these contracts, these companies will remain until the year 2076 (70 year contracts). Throughout the whole process, no local communities could be found that were consulted before the government approved land concessions to private companies.

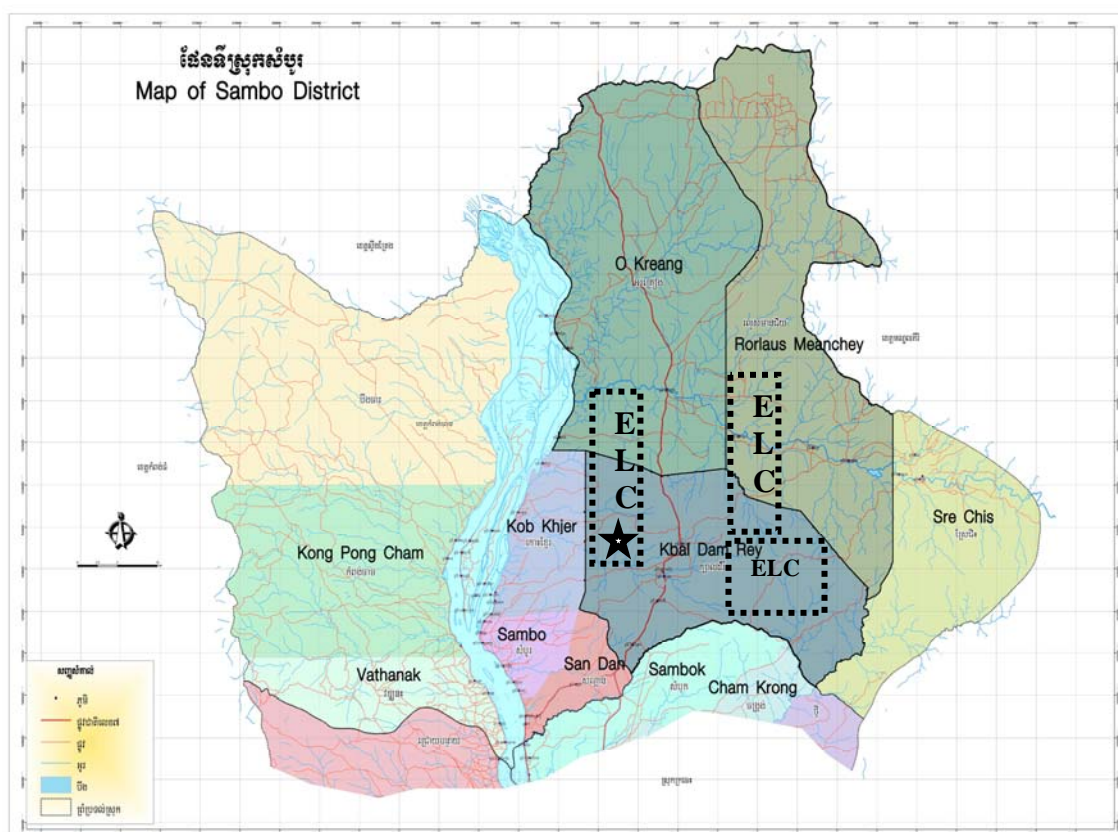
## **5.2.4 The Presence of Global Agricultural Development Company**

### **5.2.4.1 Introduction to the Company**

The Global Agriculture Development Company (Cambodia) Co.; LTD is one amongst three Chinese companies that have the same signing contract date and came to the communities on the same date too. The company had been centrally authorized to invest in Commercial Tree Plantations in Sambo distrit, Kratie Province a long the last section of the national road No. 7. In May 2006, there were three Economic land concession companies covering almost 30,000 hectares of forestland that appeared in Kbal Damrey commune and another two neighboring communes of Sambor District, Kratie province, including O Kreang and Rorlaus Meanchey.

In fact, there are six Chinese land concessions companies in Sambo district that received authorization to invest in commercial plantations from the national government, but I pointed out here only the three companies which came to the community on the same date and were related to my research site, as the other three came after. These three Chinese companies came into the communities through contract agreements that were signed by MAFF and companies on 15 March 2006.

According to an agreement paper, the Global Agricultural Development (Cambodia) Co. Ltd occupies 9,800 hectares of land in Kbal Damrey and O Kreang Commune; the Asia World Agricultural Development (Cambodia) Co. Ltd occupies 10,000 hectares in Kbal Damrey and Rorlaus Mean Chey communes; and the Green Island Agricultural Development (Cambodia) Co. Ltd occupies 10,000 hectares in Kbal Damrey commune for 70 years (Figure 5.3).



**Figure 5.3 Locations of three Chinese ELC in Kbal Damrey Commune**

The Global Agricultural Development (Cambodia) Co. Ltd has an office located at No. 1533, National Road No. 2, Sangkat Chak Angrai Kroum, Khan Mean Chay, Phnom Penh. This Company directed by Ms. KWOK LAI NGAN WAN, American nationality, but at the site known as Chinese company, holding bank account No. 0100 306 028 with the Canadia Bank located at No.265-269 Ang Doung Street, Phnom Penh. The company is holding an area of 9800 hectares, located in O Tanoeung and Sre Sbov villages of Kbal Dam Rey commune and a part of its neighboring commune of O Kreang (Figure 5.3 and 5.4). The coordinates of the

granted area for this company, were demarcated within a few days by the mixed study group, using UTM without local participation. As result, the ELC's demarcated area, overlapped the forestland sought out as a community forest. It was demarcated as a rectangle with the following coordinates:

- X: 620000- Y: 1421000    - X: 620000-Y: 1437000
- X: 627000-Y: 1437000    - X: 627000-Y: 1421000

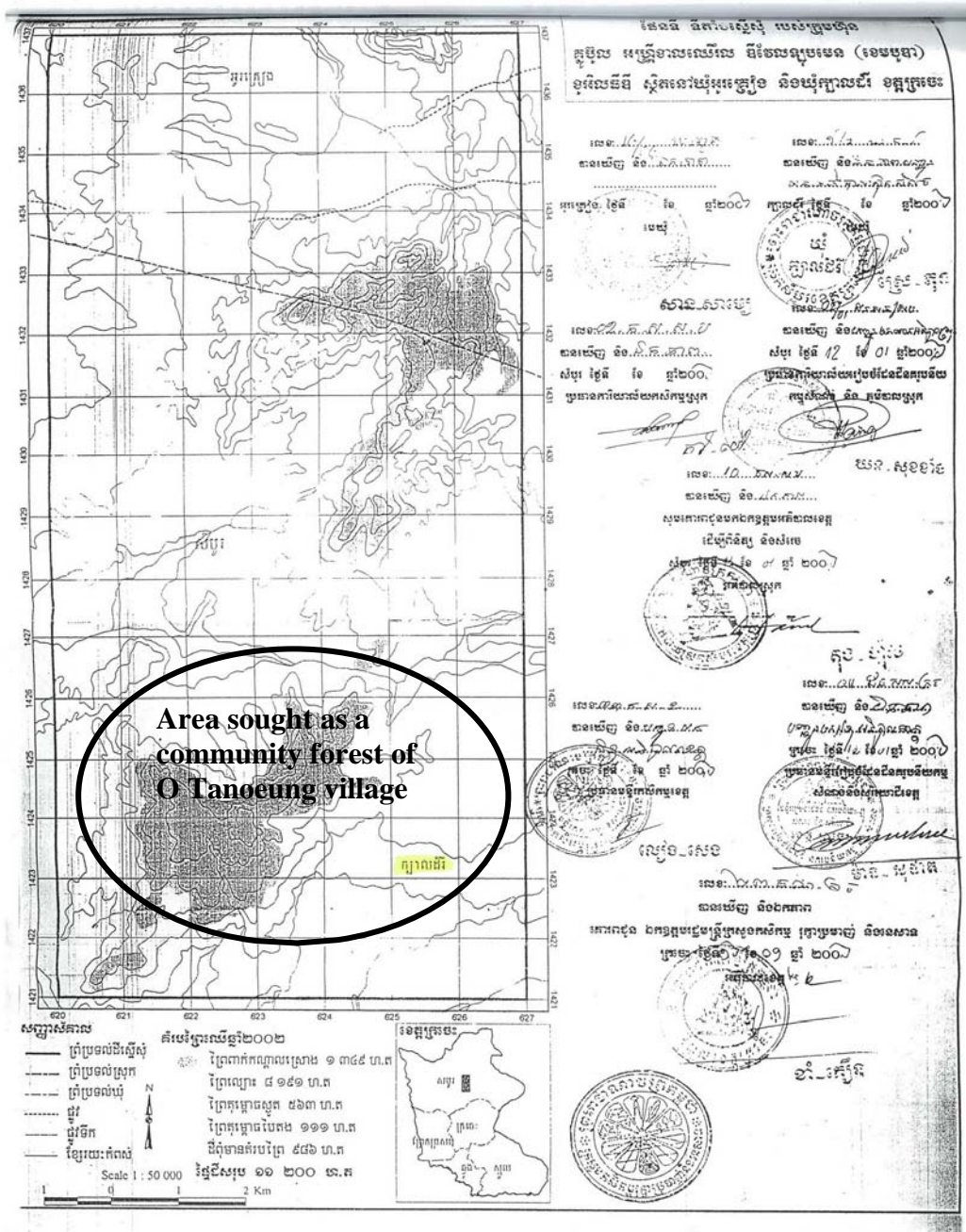


Figure 5.4 The location Map of Global Agriculture Development Company

- Kbal Damrey Commune head, Mr. Sre Ton agreed and sent to District Governor of Sambo to decide (signed and stamped on .... / ..... / 2006 No.12/06Xkr).
- Kreang Commune head, Mr. San Sarom agreed (signed and stamped on ..... / ..... / 2006 No.16/06 XGK).
- Office Head of Land Management, Urbanization, Construction of Sambo district, Mr. Khorn Sokkham saw and sent to District Governor (signed 12/ Jan / 2006 No.02/01 dnsP/sb).
- Office Head of Agriculture of Sambo district, Mr. Kom Mao saw and agreed (signed on .... / ..... / 2006 No. 02 kssb).
- Sambo District Governor, Mr. Tong Hul saw, agreed and respectively sent to Provincial governor to decide (signed and stamped on 13/ Jan / 2006 No. 10 clsb).
- Director of Provincial Land Management, Urbanization, Construction Department, Mr. Mann Sophat agreed and sent to Provincial governor (signed and stamped on 12/ Jan/2006 No.011 dnss/Rkc).
- Representative of Director of Provincial Agricultural Department, Deputy Director Mr. Leang Seng saw and sent to Provincial governor; (signed and stamped on ... / .... / 2006 No. 33 ksx).
- Provincial Governor, His Excellency Kham Poeun saw, agreed and respectively sent to His Excellency Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery (signed and stamped on 16/ Jan/ 2006 No. 23 cN/Rkc).

**Figure 5.5 the agreement Date on ECL boundary Demarcation by related Officials** (translated from Figure 5.4)

Seeing the above location map of the ECL area, we could understand the government study group's simplified way of boundary demarcation without considering the complexity of ecosystem or the local's traditional way of life. As some villagers reported and the author also saw, while walking to the ELC area, some natural creeks were cut by demarcated-boundary trenches of the company. Villagers complained that this destroyed natural systems of water resources in that area, leading to somehow negatively affect fishery resources, and water resources for their cattle and ecosystem for rice plantations. In addition, this straight rectangular boundary line included the locals' farmlands; where those were scattered, not in one large single piece of land, inside the forest for many years. As result, conflicts have been sparked between the villagers and company since the company first started implementing its project.



According to the agreement paper, the company will plant teak trees (*Tectona Grandi*) as the main production crop and other crops as secondary production. Within this 9,800 ha of forestland, the company set a plan to clear the forest and plant the trees and other crops as follows: for the first year, the company will clear forest and plant trees on 1,800 h and then it will continue to clear and plant on 2,000 ha for the second years, and keep increasing by 2000 hectares each year until the fifth year. This means that the 9,800 forestland will be completely cleared within 5 years according to the plan. However, based on MAFF website updated in November 2008 ([www.maff.gov.kh](http://www.maff.gov.kh)), the company made a 25 hectare sawing field and sowed 380,000 trees, planted 50,000 teak trees along the main company road, constructed 8 buildings for staff and workers and cleared land along the border of the concession 47 km.

#### **5.2.4.2 No Local Consultation**

*“Krom Hun Chin (Chinese company) is clearing the forests. Forests no longer exist, and our lives will face difficulties in the near future. Our children will not see and know the natural value of trees and wild animals in this area. If the government sold land to the Chinese, what can we do?”* villager quote.

The words ‘Dey Chin’ is very common for the O Tanoeng villagers. Since the Global Agricultural Development (Cambodia) Co., Ltd came to take over forestland in the village area in May 2006, no villager has been told what the company plans to do with that huge area of forestland. In fact, they did not even know though the name of the company. During the time that I was staying in the village; I asked many villagers with a question: “What is the name of the company?” Their answer was “I don’t know”, but they knew it was a Chinese company because the workers speak Chinese. Actually, according to the agreement papers between the company and MAFF, dated on 15 March 2006, this company is directed by Ms. Kwok Lai Ngan Wan, of American nationality. From my point of view, she may be a Chinese American, because there is no Caucasian man there, and her name is traditional Chinese.

According to the local people and authorities, the director of Global Agricultural Development (Cambodia) Co., Ltd Company, Ms. Kwok Lai Ngan Wan, and Mr. Wan Ylu Ming, director of Asia World Agricultural Development

(Cambodia) Co., Ltd, holding an area of 10,000 hectares, are parent and son. I also found that Mr. Kwok Stanley Kar Kuen, American (maybe Chinese American) is directing two companies (Green Island Agricultural Development (Cambodia) Co., Ltd and Plantation Agricultural Development (Cambodia) Co., Ltd Company), located in Kbal Dam Rey and Ros Laus Mean Chey communes.

Moreover, a local NGO, Cambodian Community Development (CCD-Kratie) reveals that all six economic land concession companies in Sambo district, Kratie province have only one office for their work operation in provincial town of Kraie Province. Evidentially, those economic land concessions have been granted without regarding to the Land law of 2001, that its article 59 prohibits the grant of concession in several locations to jointly exceed the total of 10,000 hectares in order to prevent a single person/company to hold excessive land.

Privatization of forestland in the commune has been done without local participation. The villagers did not know that the central government granted the forestland area to private companies. Until the companies started clearing land and forest areas to create roads and dig trenches to prevent villagers and their cattle from accessing areas within the concession, the people began to be aware that the companies were encroaching on their livelihood sources. This reflected to the study that the working groups from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries who had simply demarcated boundary for the 9800 of land in rectangular size that, did not discuss with the locals at all.

According to all 30 selected households from O Tanoeng village, the company appeared in the community without the locals' acknowledgement. They reported that no villagers were consulted or informed about such a development project at all. Activities of the company encroached on agricultural land and grazing land and destroyed natural forest, and creeks that lead to somehow to affect their livelihoods. Moreover, the people have not been allowed to freely enter into the forest to collect non-timber forest products and to ride their ox-cart on the road. The villagers reported that the company filled up with red soil and extended into wider road on their ox-cart road and did not allow them to use it by claiming that the ox-cart will damage the road.

Even the people who walk on that road were required to write down his/her name and sign in the list at the check-in booth in which the company's Chinese staffs were working while guarded by gunmen. This led some villagers to be concerned that in the future the company might use that name list with the villagers' signatures to prove that the villagers agreed with the company on [something] because many villagers are illiterate people, and they did not know what was written on that paper. Although the people signed on the name list, they were not allowed to hold any cutting tools such as knife, ax, and saw, while walking across the forest area. This context was argued by a 56 farmer, Mr. Sok by comparably saying that "*the riverside dwellers, whenever they leave home they need boat and paddle; but the forest dwellers, whenever they leave home they need knife or ox.*" Then, he raised a question that "*what could we do if we enter the forest with empty hands?*"

The central government promotes economic land concession for commercial tree plantation with expectation that the company will help to develop local community through creating job for the local people and improving infrastructure in the community such as a health care center, school, road, irrigation system, drinking water and pagoda for the purposes of poverty alleviation and improvement of state revenue. In fact, the company has been in the community for almost three years, but the local development has not been seen yet. The company built only the company office, and a road connected from national road No. 7 to the company office. The road was built on the old ox-cart road, and the local people were not allowed to freely use that road.

Remarkably, all people of the O Tanoeung village did not go to work for the company. This was not only because of the working conditions, low salary and lack of freedom of work, but because of their unhappiness with the company's activities. All 30 households said that they do not want to be slaves for these Chinese companies. They prefer to work on their own which can earn more income than working for the company. They asserted that whenever they have land for cultivation they will not work for those concessionaires. Some villagers express their ideas that "*Chinese came to take over Khmer land and required Khmer to work for them as slaves; even though they die they will not work for those land robbers*".

Nowadays, the villagers unhappily recognize ‘Dey Chin’ (Chinese land) in Khmer territory. The digging trench around the concession area of the Chinese company is a barrier to prevent the local people from accessing their livelihood sources and natural resources that they previously used to utilize and maintain for many generations. That digging trench is not only a boundary of the company’s territory, but it also limits the accessibility of the locals to forest resources and endangers their cattle. Reportedly, there were six calves that fell down into the digging trench and died in 2007. It caused the local people to feel stress under such a development project. Although the villagers lost a part of their livelihood resources, there is no one from the village go to work for the company.

According to the villagers, although being granted only 9,800 hectares, which is stated in the agreement document, the company may operate on an area bigger than that. In addition, the trench blocked some natural water ways (natural streams) and wild animals, because that trench had been dug around the granted area with a 1.2 meter width, and was about 1.8 meters deep. Most importantly, much of that area is not degraded forest as the government’s claims, but it is *Prey Chas* (a local term meaning “old forests”). That area is a dense, chaotic forest, and it is a habitat to many kinds of animals and valuable timber.

More clearly, the commune land use and natural resource map of Kbal Dam Rey commune, which has been scientifically done by the CCB-NREM project, supported by DANIDA and implemented by Seila Program in 2006, identified the area of the commune as ‘dry evergreen broad leafed forest’, deciduous forest, and mixed forest (evergreen and deciduous) with a total area of more than 50,000 hectares (see detail in Chapter I, section 1.6.2). All natural forests and vegetation has been cleared nowadays to plant teak trees and other quick growing trees for commercial purposes under the auspices of foreign companies.

Following the arrival of this company, the illegal logging around the village also started spreading without control. The illegal logging has been practiced by rich families in the village, military officials and outsiders in the area outside the concession boundary. Those people usually have a good relationship with the authorities at all levels from communal to provincial. According to the villagers, O Tanoeng village has 7 sets of wood sawing machines and many chainsaws. Amongst

those, one belongs to the military official, two belong to the rich local people and the other three were from outside the community.

#### **5.2.4.3 Work Situation in Economic Land Concessions**

Actually, there was no one from the O Tanoeng village working for the Global Agricultural Development Company. However, Mr. Mao, who is not a farmer and used to be a wild animal trader, went to work for Green Island Company for a year and half. He asserted that the work conditions within other companies in that region are not much different from the one he worked for. He added that those companies are Chinese and they have relationships with each other.

Mr. Mao revealed that he accepted to work for the company because the company chose him to work as a team leader and allow his wife to do business in the company. This family had a good relationship with Chinese people because a group of 20 Chinese and some Cambodian workers first arrived in the village and rented their big wooden house for about 5 months at a cost of US\$ 100 per month. The wife of this family reported that when those Chinese were staying in her house, many villagers were not happy with her family, and they accused her family of renting a house to the foreigners who robbed Khmer land.

Mr. Mao reported that he worked as a leader of a chainsaw group and rock collection group. He received US\$ 100 for the first month, then US\$ 210 from the second month onward. His wife sold some groceries and snakes to the workers in the company. His wife added that she was the only Khmer vendor in the company, but many sellers were Chinese people. They further said that there were about 100 Khmer workers; most of them were from Kampong Chhnang, Kampong Cham, Prey Veng, Kampong Speu, Ta Koe province. Those workers are treated if they get sick, but the treatment will be only five days. If any worker gets sick longer than five days, they have to respond by themselves, and their salary will be reduced following the absent days.

According to Mr. Mao, the Khmer workers could receive salary based on their skill. While he was working in the company, it was the first step of the company's project. Therefore, most of the workers were working in the construction field and they were provided three meals a day and salary ranging from US\$ 35 up to US\$180

based on their skills and experiences (Table 5.2). He added that those workers had a collective kitchen that often offered insufficient food lacking in nutrients. It reminded him of the experiences during the Khmer Rouge period.

**Table 5.2 Salary of Workers of Concession Company**

Working Group	Salary per month (US\$)	
	Skillful	Unskillful
Carpenter for Wooden construction	150\$	35\$-85\$
Bricklayer for Concrete Construction	85\$	35\$-40\$
Stone Hitter for Stone Collection	--	35\$-40\$
Blacksmith for Iron Construction	120\$	40\$
Maintainer <i>Tree Seeding</i>	--	22,500 Riel (About 55\$) and 25kg. of rice
Bulldozer Driver for road Construction and forest clearance	180\$	--
Truck Driver for road Construction	130\$	--
Chainsaw Driver for Logging	85\$	35\$-40\$

By January 2008, Mr. Mao stopped working for the company because they saw a good opportunity to make money through logging. Mr. Mao's wife revealed that her family stopped working for the company and started a business with a wood sawmill. The wife said that doing business with timber could earn much more money than working for the company. She reported that the daily money that her families earned from the wood sawmill was equivalent to a month's salary of working with the company.

However, she mentioned that doing business with a wood sawmill required spending a lot of money to many relevant authorities such as US\$ 100 per month to the Police Military (PM), US\$50 per month for police, for US\$50 per month to the military, US\$10-20 to the environmental official whenever they come, and a monthly to the forestry cantonment of Kratie province (she did not clearly know how many US dollars that her husband gave to the forestry cantonment per month). She highlighted that since the Chinese companies arrived, doing business with wood sawmill seemed easier than before. She expressed that the forests will be finished in the near future

because the company has been clearing a large part, and mobile-tray sawmills were operating in the existing part.

Another villager went to work for the same company as Mr. Mao did. She is from a very poor family with no land for agricultural cultivation and living in very small house. Before, the company came into the community; she was always hired to work on a farm in the village. She was stopped from her work by the company because of a small mistake. Listening to her story, I realized that no responsibility from the government to workers' rights in these companies. As those relevant governmental departments are sitting only in their offices in town and civil society has also been restricted, those companies could easily break the employment law of the Kingdom and do not respect the human rights.

Chhin, 25 years old described her story as follows: she started working as a construction worker for the company in June 2006. She was provided a salary of US\$35 per month. Five month later, she was moved to work as a cleaner and clothes washer for the Chinese staff and she was given a salary of US\$ 40 per month. She worked with this duty for more than a month. One day in the morning, she was washing by using water from the toilet basin (water reservoir tank next to the toilet), because the water from the pipe was cut at that time. Accidentally, the clothes owner saw her taking water from the toilet basin, and then blamed her that she did not sanitize the clothes and it made his body itchy. In the afternoon on the same day, she was called to the company's office to paid her salary for that month and to fire her from the job.

#### **5.2.4.4 From NTFP Collectors to Illegal logging Workers**

Since arrival of economic land concessions, some 30 households of O Tanoeung village are involved with illegal loggers through working as sawmill operators, timber cutters, log and plywood transporters, log-bark/tree bark removers and so forth. The presence of economic land concessions limits livelihood opportunities from the natural resources, and has resulted in some villagers changing from NTFP collection and/or hunting to working with illegal loggers to generate income. Since the central government granted thousands of hectares of forested land

in the region to private companies, the illegal logging outside the economic land concession areas has dramatically spread.

Many reasons were pointed out from local people and authorities. The villagers complained that the local authorities and other relevant government agents such as forestry officers and environment officers have not taken any action against illegal loggers. In addition, they became the backbone for those loggers. However, the local authorities gave excuses that it was difficult to seek cooperation to fight against those illegal activities from setoral officials such as forestry officers, environmental officers, police officers and military police officers. The local authorities further explained that there were some powerful people at the provincial level who are behind illegal loggers.

Observably, the spread of illegal logging is worse since the arrival of land concession companies. It seems that they are competing with each other to gain benefit from the existing natural forests. Some people believed that the forest will no longer exist because the concession companies will take all someday, because the evergreen forests have already been granted to concession companies. Therefore, the loggers tried to tie up a good relationship with some powerful people in order to operate sawmills in the area around the village.

In O Tanoeng village, there were 7 sets of sawmills, illegally operated by powerful and rich people from inside and outside the community. According to the villagers and CC, a few sets of this kind of sawmill actually used to appear in the community in the very late 1990s and early 2000s, but they were prohibited to operate when the national government began to review the forest concessions and enforce the forestry law in the early 2000s. Since then, illegal logging activities were reduced. However, such illegal logging has been revitalized with the arrival of the economic land concession companies and this has created conflicts with local communities.

Recently, livelihood activities of the O Tanoeng villagers have been changed somehow resulted from the arrival of economic land concessions in the community. In some families, the livelihoods, which used to mostly rely on non timber forest product (NTFP) collection and hunting, were replaced by working for illegal loggers. The case of Mr. Von's family could be drawn as an example for this change. Mr. Von's family has seven members. Before 2007, his family cultivated rice on 1.5



hectares of paddy rice fields during the rainy season and almost every day they entered the forest to collect NTFP and hunt wild animals during the dry season. He mentioned that he went to collect NTFP and occasionally hunt wildlife about 28 days a month. Since 2007, after the rice harvest, he and his two sons started to work for sawmill; instead of collecting NTFP and hunting. He reported that his first jobs were as a sawdust collector and plywood classifier with a pay of 10,000 Riel per day. His sons, one is 17 years old and another one is 14 years old, worked as tree bark removers for 1,500 Riel per 3 or 4 meter long log. Mr. Von revealed that after he worked for a year as a sawdust collector, he could learn how to operate sawmill machine. Hence, he was allowed to operate sawmill with a better pay of 45,000 Riel per day. His two sons were paid for as much tree bark as they could remove in a day.

#### **5.2.4.5 Restriction to Civil Society**

In Kratie province, there are 20 NGOs including 17 local NGOs and 3 International NGOs (NGO list, 2007 provided by CED). According to Mr. Yous Pheary, CED director; these 20 NGOs were organized as a committee (NGOs Network) of Non-government Organizations in Kratie province, namely CNGO Co-ordination Committee Kratie Province using the acronym COCOM. This network aims:

- To coordinate amongst NGOs basing in Kratie province;
- To facilitate overlapping target areas of some NGOs in project implementation
- To strongly advocate with the Government, in order to help the local people

The COCOM was structured into board, committee members, permanent general secretary and secretary. It was divided into five sub-committees; each committee had its own members including Human Rights and Democracy with 9 NGO members; Education with 12 NGO members; Natural Resource and Environment Management with 9 NGO members; Multiple Development with 12 NGO member and Human Resource Capacity Building and Culture 11 NGO members.

Mr Yous Pheary revealed that all 20 NGOs agreed to link with each other as a network, in order to make a stronger civil society movement and solidarity for helping the victims, particularly local people. He clarified that all these NGOs individually

operate their core work in their target areas, but they sometimes need to strategically work together as a group. He drew an example of the economic land concession issues that appeared at the ground without public hearing and affected natural resources and environment and local community livelihoods. He explained that since many land companies appeared in Kratie province, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been concerned about the impacts of those land concessions on natural resources and environment and local community livelihoods. This concern led them to seek strategies to help the local people who were affected by those companies. He illustrated that to challenge with the powerful group such as companies and authorities, each NGO could not separately work; but they need to stand on the network to help the victim groups as well as help each other.

Based on Mr. Pheary, this NGO network intervened in conflicts between the local people and economic land concessions in Kratie province, in particular in Kbal Damrey commune, through taking legal action such as petitions, supporting the locals to see the government authorities, advocacy with authorities and so forth. With this NGO network support, the grass roots people could organize a legal action to protest with the concessionaires. The CED director explained a critical case of three communes, including Kbal Damrey, O Kreang, and Ros Lousmeanchey that soon after COCOM received a petition letter on the companies attempted to encroach on their farmlands and forests areas from the communities; COCOM members conducted a primary field study to understand the issues. Immediately following the study, COCOM sent the study report to the provincial governor on 19 June 2006. The report mainly focused on the companies' activities that started to sprayed, pained on trees and pegged to set up a boundary marker crossing over rice fields and covering on forest area sought as a community forest.

Mr. Pheary however revealed that COCOM has faced restrictions on their freedoms of movement and pressure from companies and government authorities since second haft of 2007. The network was prohibited not to support the villagers to protest against those concessionaires by provincial authority. On 02 August 2007, the provincial governor issued a letter No. 391 IRkc a pursuant to letter No. 797 sCN, dated on 06 July 2007 of Ministry of Interior to stop COCOM from its activities with the reason that it was not registered in the Ministry of Interior.

The CED is one of COCOM's membership organizations and an active NGO in supporting the people of Kbal Damrey, particularly O Tanoeung village to legally protest against Global Agricultural Development Company, and has faced threats and restrictions in relation to its work with communities affected by economic land concessions in Sambo district. According to Mr. Pheary, Provincial authorities require CED to seek authorization prior to organizing community activities in Sambo district, but restrictions do not apply in other districts. The NGO was accused of inciting villagers to protest against the concessionaires.

### **5.3 The Local Responses: From protest to Silent Resistance**

Clearance of forestland and grazing land leading to loss of livelihood sources became the biggest concern for the local community. Since mid-2006, the concessionaires started to clear land and forested areas to create roads and teak plantations, and dug trenches to prevent villagers and their cattle from accessing the area within the concession. The villagers feared there will be insufficient land and forest resources for future survival of their community. The O Tanoeung Villagers as well as Sre Sbov villagers and O Kreang villagers of O Kreang Commune confronted the Economic Land Concession Company, Global Agricultural Development (Cambodia) Co.; Ltd from the beginning as the concession area lay on the area of these three villages.

However, their protest could not put pressure on the government to cancel the project. It could be expressed that even though the locals could not prevent natural resources in their community, they were still lucky to successfully defend their farmland from encroachment from the company. The community seems to have given up their protest to the companies' projects, but they still silently resist to such development projects in different ways.

#### **5.3.1 Protest for Paddy Rice Fields**

The confrontation scene was passed over before I came to conduct my study for this thesis. However, some key informants and villagers provided me with some information related to the scene that allowed me to understand the context and local movement to protesting against the private companies. According to my key

informants, the local community had immediately voiced their opposition to the presence and activities of the concessionaire, and called for action to secure their sources of livelihoods. The people took actions through petitions and public protests to notify the concessionaire and government authorities about the impacts of the concession on their land and livelihoods. Although the villagers have protested and petitioned the commune, district, and provincial authorities, their concern has not yet found any satisfactory resolution. Currently, the company continues to clear land and forested areas for their commercial plantations of teak trees.

After signing the contract on 15 March 2006, the Global Agriculture Development Company (Cambodia) Co.; LTD as well as the other two companies that arrived in the Kbal Damrey commune, began implementing its project by spraying, painting on trees and pegging to make a boundary marker of the concession area crossing over agricultural lands of many villagers. Following the marker, bulldozers started clearing land with the purpose of dividing the area into plots for the new plantations, the company's office and wood processing factory. The boundary marker and land clearance woke the villagers up to know that there were foreigner companies attempting to destroy their means of livelihood and endanger their future survival. Faced with losing their land, the villagers gathered together throughout the villages to stop bulldozers from clearing land.

The villagers said: *“The forest clearing activities startled the local people and they were wondering what those activities were for. Where were they coming from, and who allowed them to cut trees”*. This allowed the villagers to know that these companies' activities were encroaching on their agricultural land and forestland that best served their livelihoods for many generations and an area that was proposed to be a community forest. In this sense, the people took actions against those activities by stopping bulldozers from clearing land and going to complain to the local authorities and then complaining to the provincial authorities through the Kratie Based NGO (CED and COCOM) to solve the problem.

In case of Mr. Sok Ven, a villager of Sre Sbov village was reported that the company bulldozed his rice field that his family has occupied since the early 1980s, because the company first started its clearing activities in this village. My key informants in O Tanoeng village described that Mr. Ven tried to ask the company to

stop encroaching on his land, but it was not effective. Meanwhile, this man rushed back and forth in the village to make sure the village heard about the company activities. Immediately following that information, some villagers went to the ground and halted the bulldozers. At the same, some people went to complain to the village head and commune councilors. The group of villagers was told by a bulldozer driver that the Chinese company hired him to bulldoze over land following the demarcation markers.

That information was quickly spread from one person to another in all villages of the commune. In O Tanoeng village, the villagers, who have their farmlands around the conflicting location, gathered to see the situation; and they saw the demarcation markers such as painting/spaying on trees and some pegs on the ground. They realized that if they allowed the company to bulldoze land straight forward following those markers some of them would lose farmland. Since the company's activities were seen to directly affect the communities' livelihood, the local people gathered together to discuss and find solutions.

They complained to the village head and communal authorities about the company activities and asked the authority to take action to stop such activities. However, the villagers reported that the authorities did not, at that time, take any action against the company. Hence, they accused those relevant authorities of not paying attention to serving and protecting the local benefits. Instead, they supported the companies. Some villagers revealed that some individual officials informally warned the people not to damage any the company's property. If the people damage the belongings of the companies, they would be jailed. One villager imitated a local official's words that *"if you go together to resist the company, you (villagers) would be hit/kicked and arrested, because the company comes with permission from Samdek PM. Hun Sen."*

The commune authority commented on this accusation, however when I asked them to clarify this issue, they said it was a "national government policy in development for the nation for poverty reduction". They defended themselves by saying they are the lower level officials; they could not deny the upper level government officials' decision. However, they confirmed that they reported to the district and provincial authorities on the villagers' reaction to the concessionaires in

order to let them know and come to settle the dispute. This could be argued that the local authorities did not responsibly serve and defend benefits for their voters. Instead, they politically need to respect their bosses at the provincial and national levels; otherwise their position might not be secure. This shows the weakness of the democratic system in Cambodia. Since the election was designed to vote for the political parties, all local authorities have to be members of the political parties, and they will be appointed to the position by their respective parties after the party wins the election.

The key informants reported that no authorities have come to help solve the conflict yet, and most of villagers have gathered to confront those companies several times. Meanwhile, some of O Tanoeng and Sre Sbov villagers went to obstruct the bulldozers of the global agricultural development company, while some other villagers who were from other villages went to obstruct activities of other companies that intended to take over their farmland. They also revealed that they had planned to petition the Prime Minister and the King if the provincial governor could not find any solution.

A 76-year-old man from O Tanoeng village, Mr. Tok Chean revealed that because the local authorities did not take any action to help the O Tanoeng villagers, the villagers always came to discuss with him to find a way to send the company out. Mr. Tok Chean became a key person amongst O Tanoeng protestors, because he is a knowledgeable man and has served this community since the early 1980s. He used to be a soldier and police officer in Kbal Damrey commune up until 1999. He was appointed to serve as a head O Tanoeng village until 2004. This man later on was elected to be chief O Tanoeng commune forestry in late 2006. He was the one who led the villagers to demarcate the community forestry boundary.

By 29 May 2006, the villagers jointly petitioned the NGO Coordination Committee Kratie Province (COCOM) and attached their thumb print to the petition to seek intervention in their land issues. According to CED director, soon after COCOM received that letter from the locals, COCOM conducted a study to verify the issues and reported to and asked for a solution from the provincial governor on 19 June 2006. Following the petition, the villagers were informed that the provincial governor will come to settle dispute between those companies and the locals. During

that time, the companies avoided clearing on the conflict ground, but they cleared forestland farther away from the villagers' farmlands and constructed roads from the national road No.7 to their companies' offices. The companies kept clearing forest to set out plots of land by claiming that they bought that land from the government with a lot of money to develop tree plantations.

Since the company claimed that, the villagers attempted to defend their farmlands anyhow by expressing that "*although the government sold this whole region to you (company), we will not allow you to take our farmlands. If you still attempt to do so, we will burn those machines*". This strong expression led the company to move its machinery from clearing and digging trench to making a boundary for their lands to prepare places for company offices and factory buildings and for building entrance roads from the national road No.7 to the company offices about 3 or 4 km from the National Road No.7 in the West and East of the villages (one company is in the West and two companies in East of the national road).

By January 2007, a deputy provincial governor, Mr. Thun Kry came to settle a dispute between those three companies and the communities in Cham Hor Pagoda, nearby O Tanoeng Bridge. The presence of this governor to the community was after a group of Cham Hor villagers led by the village head went to the Green Island Agricultural Development company's office requesting a meeting to solve their concerns and one family's rice field-based house was burnt when workers of this company were burning grass to clear the forest and fire fell on his house. The information of the governor's presence in the community was passed to O Tanoeng and Sre Sbov villagers, and they were ready to come to protect and demand those companies leave their community.

The deputy governor, at that time, accompanied by a representative of the companies, related officials such as forestry officials, district governor; and several armed forces (police and military police). Meanwhile, there were about 200 villagers, from Kbal Domrey (O Taneoung, Sre Sbov and Cham Horb village), most of them very much concerned about losing their farmlands. These villagers have long shared similar interests in rice productions and livelihood strategies, and their rice fields typically spread out in the area on both sides of the national road No.7 (the location of these villages was explained in Chapter IV, section 4.1.1). These three villages also

shared the same problems of encroaching from those companies and losing rights of access to forest resources.

They collectively demanded to withdraw those Chinese companies out of the communities. The people who were from villages of O Tanoeng and Sre Sbov demanded the Global Agricultural Development Company move away from the community, because this company was granted 9.800 hectares of land mainly based in these two villages and it attempted to encroach over the locals' farmland. These two villages have their rice fields located in the West of national road No.7 and typically spread out in the area that does not precisely divide a clear boundary between the two villages. Some of Sre Sbov villagers, who have their rice field located in the East of the national road No.7, also demanded that the Asia World Agricultural Development company leave the community due to their attempted encroachment over their farmland in that area. For the people from Cham Hor village, they also have rice fields in the East of the national road where encroachment attempts were made by the Green Island Agricultural Development. The people of these villages were not only facing loss of their lands, but they were also barred from entering the forest areas that they had used for a long time.

At the meeting, the governor explained however, to the participants that those companies were permitted by the national government (Samdech Hun Sen, Prime Minister) to develop tree plantations and wood processing factories. The governor mentioned that the government granted only "State Land" to the companies, not (villagers) farmland. He said that those lands are 'degraded' forest areas, thus those companies came to reforest in those areas and to establish factories for producing wood products for export. He also claimed that those companies will help to develop local infrastructure and to provide jobs to the local people in order to reduce poverty in the region. He emphasized that [*in the future Cambodia will export wood products out and import 'US Dollars' in*] (?).

Ms. Chanthy, 40 years old, an O Tanoeng villager pointed out her own view, when interviewed for the household survey: that "*poverty in this community can be reduced, whenever the people have land for rice cultivations. In the future, the member of each family will increase and they will need land for rice productions. But, companies now took over all reserve land, thus how the new members can acquire*



*land, when they need. They will have no land for rice cultivation. If they do not have land, how will the poverty be reduced?"*

Even though the provincial governor told the villagers to understand that the villagers will benefit from such development through labor jobs, which are offered by the companies, some of the protestors still demand that the Chinese companies must be kicked out from the communities. Otherwise, natural forest resources will be destroyed. According to some O Tanoeng villagers who were interviewed, they explained that after listening to the provincial governor's explanation they realized that they could not be against the companies, because the government defended those companies. One villager stated that *"We are poor rural people and illiterate. When we face any problem we need the government who are educated people and have power to help us, but now the government sold land to these companies and stands on the company side. What can we do? Just follow Karmar"*. Another villager, Ms. Phem Sy, 64 years old took a passive proverb *"the egg cannot clash to the stone"* to express her hopelessness in protesting to kick out the company.

Mr. Tok Chean revealed that many villagers were strongly concerned about their rice fields and requested to the governor to ask those companies to move away from their farmland. The request was taken into consideration by the governor and companies. The company representatives promised that they would try to leave the farmland. The villagers strongly demanded that those companies move away from the villages as far as possible until every villager's farmland is not to be taken over. In addition, the villagers requested the companies to leave at least 500 meters of land from all plots of farmland that are farthest from the villages and closest to the companies' lands. This demand was facilitated by the governor and the companies agreed to do so.

However, in O Tanoeng village, even though the Global Agricultural Development Company complied with the villagers' demands; in practice, the company left about 100 meters of land from some plots of the farmland located close to the company's land. For example, Mr. Yoeun, an O Tanoeng villager revealed that the company left about 100 meters of land from his plot of farmland. This man has a plot of farmland located in the old village (*Chror Phark*) close to the concession area. On the day that I visited the old village, he brought me to see the land that was

left in between his farmland and the concession boundary, and expressed that *“It is lucky that the company left this land, as at the beginning it attempted to take all this area. Having this plot of land is better than lose all.”* He added that *“I am not happy with this, but I cannot do anything because the government allowed this company to take this land”*.

The protest of the O Tanoeng as well as other villages, however, was undertaken as a group rather than individually. Protest of O Tanoung villagers seems to have been a collective decision and action by a majority group. The villagers worked together to try to halt the bulldozers that were clearing land nearby their rice fields and intended to encroach on their lands. This collective approach was shown as the protests were waning. The locals frequently stated that they would continue to protest the actions of the Chinese Company if the others in their village were willing to do so. Mr. Tok Chean stated that it was impossible to send the company out from the community because the government strongly defended the company. He pointed that *“the government perhaps wants the people here to be slaves for foreigner on their own land (Khmer land) more than letting them work on their own”*

With the momentum of their set of protests long ended, it seems that the villagers have given up that resistance. There were no immediate intentions to try to stop the clear cutting, which has been continued with support from the government at all levels. There is a sense of hopelessness and definitely an awareness of their lack of power amongst villagers for sending that company out of the community. Almost everyone, who was interviewed, felt that since these protests did not lead to success, there was no point in trying again, except if the company again takes over their paddy rice fields.

### **5.3.2 Resistance through Silent Actions**

*“Before and after, natural forest resources and wildlife will be gone.”* This statement made by some villagers in O Tanoeng village, emphasizes the hopelessness of the community in protesting against the powerful industrial company. The villagers wanted to kick it out in order to prevent the destruction of the resources that have been used for their livelihoods for many generations. The villagers, as forest dwellers have long considered land and forest resources as essentially important to

their living, and now could only murmur to themselves that they will lose those natural resources.

However, although they could not find the way to kick out that company; they keep opposing through not working for the company and just secretly enter into concession area to hunt, search for NTFP and cut some trees for home construction. All of the selected 30 households denied to work for the company and asserted that as long as they have farmland they will not go to work for that company. They similarly expressed that *“We want to keep our land and our forest, so that we can sustain a living from it. If we become the slaves of the companies, all family members must work, because only one family member works cannot feed a family of a whole. They will not be survived.* Instead, they said that working on the farm is hard for only a season, but the whole family can eat a year. They added that after rice harvest; they have time to relax and just sometimes enter the forest to collect non-timber forest products to support their living. Mr. Sar Morn, 56 years old, strongly expressed that *“I will never work for this Chinese company, and I will not allow my children to work for it. I have farmland for my children”*

Mr. Yoeung and Mr. Theng shared similar concerns on lack of shelter for their family. Both families' houses are small and using leaves and thatch for wall and roof. They revealed that before the company came, they were never concerned much about constructing a house, because in this region they have abundant wood. A house can be constructed anytime. However, after the company's arrival they realized that if they do not rush to find wood for building a house, their family will never have a wooden house as shelter. Mr. Yoeun as well as Mr. Theng attempted to secretly enter the concession area to find good trees for making their house columns and some other important construction materials. They said that they need to go the concession area early in the morning to find good trees and cut them down, then transport by Ox-cart during the night time. In doing so, they could escape from the concession guard's watch.

Moreover, there were some villagers who secretly cut down some young teak trees that were planted along the company's road from the national road to their office. During my second time in the village, on 29 November 2007, I was with the Commune chief, Commune deputy, Commune clerk, military official and a few police

officials in front of the house of an illegal logger, at about 9.00 am there was a mini truck (Land cruiser) with military number plates that stopped at the road edge. At that time, three people came out of the truck, one was a driver with a military uniform, one was a Chinese interpreter and another one was a Chinese representative of the company. They were standing nearby their truck and waved their hand to call the commune chief, clerk and policemen to meet them.

They came to complain to the local authorities about 150 young teak trees, which were planted along the company road, that were cut since beginning until that day meeting with the authorities. They claimed that there were some villagers cut down those teak trees, and they asked the commune chief and policemen to take action against those villagers to protect their teak trees. A day later, policemen went to see the teak trees that were cut, then reported that those trees were exactly cut, but they could not clearly assume that who did so. However, the police observed that probably the villagers, who are unhappy with the company, just cut some teak trees while they have been walking through those areas because they failed to send the company out of the region. There were no villagers responding to this issue, but some villagers just said that “*Sar Thouk*” (way of accepting Karma), when they heard that information; but in here it means that they wish such bad luck or bad thing happen to a person that they dislike or are angry with.

#### **5.4 Summary**

In this Chapter, obstruction of forestry community establishment within decentralization framework and the local response to arrival of economic land concession companies were examined to understand the dynamic of natural resource management and utilization by different actors, state and local people.

Since the first communal election, the O Tanoeng villagers collectively proposed in the process of CDP and CIP to find ways to protect natural forests as they realized the resources declined because of mismanagement. However, the government did not pay much attention to it. This initiative for managing forest resources was delayed until 2005, because there was not any support from any organization or agency. By early 2006, CED provided technical support to the local community to set up a forestry community with the financial support from NREM project.

Unfortunately, the national government authorized to invest in agro-industry (Teak Tree Plantations) to a Chinese company, called Global Agriculture Development Company.

In May 2006, the company arrived in the community to begin its project. The presence of this company not only obstructed the process of community forestry creation, but also affected the local livelihoods, because the company cleared forested areas that were the source of villagers' livelihoods. In addition, the land clearing activities encroached on the villagers' rice fields leading to conflict between villagers and the company. Rice field was the major concern of the locals, because they rely very much on it for their livelihood.

The villagers tried to protect against the company and tried different ways to kick them out of the community, but they failed to do so. Some NGOs provided legal action support to the local people in response to the private company. However, their effort was not effective as the company arrived with the support from the national government. The government signed a 70 year contract on 15 March 2006 to authorize the company to develop agro-industrial plantations (teak tree plantations) and build a wood processing factory on the area of 9,800 hectares.

This agreement was done without public hearing. The locals were not consulted. When the company first started to implement its project, conflicts sparked at the ground. The villagers' protest could only defend their farmland from encroachment of the company, but they could not claim their right over natural resources in that region as they used to practice for many generations. However, the local resistance seems continuing without end through "silent action" such as refusing to work for the company, and secretly entering the concession area to hunt or collect forest products. Some villagers recently worked for illegal loggers instead of NTFP collection because the presence of economic land concessions has restricted local people from the resources and, on the same time, illegal logging has spread in the region. These value characteristics of the natural forest have been destroying under the label of agro-industrial development supported by the government. In this sense, the locals not only reject to participate in such development scheme, but they also see this scheme as a biggest obstacle to their future life.

## **CHAPTER VI**

### **CONCLUSIONS**

This study focused on the impacts of economic land concession projects on local people's livelihoods and affects on decentralized natural resource and environmental management, especially in forest natural resource management. The collected information is essential to achieve a better understanding of the villager's level of dependence on land and forest resources, their needs and concerns, and their adaptive livelihood strategies. Therefore, the primary goal of this study was to examine the natural resource-based economic development of the Cambodian government, in the case of economic land concession grants made to private companies for commercial tree plantations, and the ways O Tanoeng villagers' responded to such an economic development project, to maintain their livelihoods.

This last chapter of the study is classified into four sections. Firstly, the main findings of this study are briefly highlighted according to the secondary data and the primary data of the research. Secondly, some theoretical concepts, which were reviewed for this study, are discussed based on what has been found in the context of the O Tanoeng village in a Northeastern Province of Cambodia. The third section attempts to suggest some implications for development policy and projects. Lastly, the limitations of this study are explained and followed by further study suggestions.

#### **6.1 The Main Findings of the Study**

Paddy rice fields, forest products and grasslands are the most important sources for forest communities' livelihoods, in particular for the O Tanoeng community of Northeastern Cambodia. With their traditional way of life as forest dwellers and the opening for local participation in the local development planning process of decentralization policy, O Tanoeng villagers attempted to participate in managing natural resources in order to respond to the decline of natural resources in the region and to sustain their livelihoods. However, this has been ignored by the economic development process of the central government. The central government authorized privatized "State Land" for agro-industrial production without

acknowledging the community forestry initiative of the local people through decentralization policy of the government itself. Furthermore, it did not clearly conduct a study on the impact on locals' livelihoods and the natural ecosystem of the region. In this context, the research findings are summarized as follows:

First, agricultural land (paddy rice fields) was found to be the most important for most of O Tanoeng villagers to make living for many generations. In O Tanoeng village, most villagers are farmers who always consider paddy rice cultivation as a main activity followed by animal raising, NTFP collection, hunting and fishing for their living. Their rice fields were taken from the forest then passed through from one generation to another. The farmlands have traditionally been recognized by use. These livelihood characteristics can highlight that land and forest sources have been an essential feature in the patterns of life for the locals and continue to be of fundamental importance, environmentally, socially and economically. Since, the area was abundant in land and forest resources, the locals freely accessed to natural resources to make their living without any concern.

Since the economic land concession company's arrival, these local livelihoods have been facing hardship. The locals have been barred from entering the forest and restricted to collect NTFP by the company. The company cleared forest along its land concession boundary and employed soldiers to patrol in and around the concession area. In this condition, the poor people tried to secretly enter the concession area to search for NTFP, timber and wild animals. The poor generally search for those forest products for their home consumption. However, the NTFP businessman still makes his business by sharing benefits with the company. In the case of Mr. Thon, he is able to continue his business as a bamboo merchant by paying 200 Riel per piece of bamboo to the company. In doing so, Mr. Thon can cut bamboo in the land concession area as much as he wants (see Chapter IV, section 4.3.2.1).

In reality, the village can be only be separated by residential houses from neighboring villages; but it does not have a clear-cut boundary which precisely separates its cultivated areas from the other villages. The villagers created their farmlands on available land and have good fertility for rice production in the community. In addition, they go to collect forest products or hunt anywhere in the region based on their own ability. The demarcating boundary of the village was

created, to facilitate government administration in controlling the people, but this can not bar them from their rights of access the natural capital for their living.

Consequently, the local community's livelihood practice was seen as a complex entity containing individuals differentiated by status, economic power, and intention. Within richness of natural resources and traditional practices of livelihood, they are never concerned about a lack of land for rice cultivation for their current subsistence economy and future new-born members, because there is a large area rich in natural forest resources. However, the large-scale development that has been supported by the national government absorbed this local village's romantic hopes.

Second, with the policy of land reform and management, the government tried to utilize land and natural resources attached with the land for economic growth. The most prominent part of this policy is the introduction of the "concession system". Currently, the concession system is applied by the government for every kind of natural resources such as land concession, fishery concession, and mining concession to accumulate benefits from those respective resources under the label of economic development for poverty alleviation. In regard to this policy, a million hectares of land was allocated to private companies by the national government through such a concession system. Much of this land was granted to private companies violating the 2001 land law and land concession regulation.

The broad development policies for economic growth and poverty alleviation, and natural resource management have been contrastingly run by the government itself. The Cambodian government policy on economic development through intensifying agricultural production has cornered the decentralized forest management and determined forest dwellers. Particularly, the O Tanoeng villagers have been a passive group of such a development process. The authorization to invest in commercial tree plantations is centrally done without public hearings or local consultation. As a result, the forest management initiated by the local community through the decentralization policy of the government failed to be practiced in some certain places and sparked conflicts on land and natural resource attached with the land utilization between the locals and private companies.

The land concession implementation has not only obstructed the decentralized natural resource and environmental management, which is accepted by the



government itself in the framework of decentralization policy, but also motivated conflicts and competition in land and forest resource use between different users. This is clearly happening in the O Tanoeng village, Kratie province where the forestland sought as a community forest by the locals within the decentralization policy framework has been taken over by the concessionaire. Following the presence of the company, the disputes in land use occurred between the locals and the company. In addition, the forest resources of the community outside the concession area have been actively illegally exploited by some powerful people from inside and outside the community. These actions are leading to the destruction of natural resources which the locals have long relied on for their livelihoods. Therefore, the O Tanoeng villagers ignore and reject participation in such a development process even though it has intended to include the local people through creating jobs for them.

Third, for most O Tanoeng farmers, farmland is their major concern because they rely very much on it for their livelihood, and it becomes the center of motivation for them to rise up against the economic land concession company. Arrival of the state-supported economic land Concession Company (Global Agriculture Development Company) intended to take most of the land in the community for use as development tree plantations and a wood processing factory. Since this development scheme was begun without local consultation, it was ignored and strongly protested by the farmers.

The farmers tried to protest against the company through different ways with the purpose of sending the development project out of the community. The local community took collective action to resist the company. They used their livelihood mechanism, local governmental mechanism, and civil society mechanism in protesting against the company in order to protect natural resources from damage and maintain their livelihood sources. However, their effort was not effective as the company arrived with the support from the national government. Since they could not find a way to send the company out, they took their paddy rice fields to be a center of negotiation with the company. The locals demanded that the company move away from their rice fields with the condition that if any villager's rice field was encroached upon, they would take violent action against with the company.

In the confrontation scene, only farmland was recognized by those developers (state and company) although the locals do not have any formal certificate. Therefore, the villagers' protest could only defend their farmlands from encroachment, but they could not claim their right over natural resources in that region as they used to practice for many generations. In this situation, they considered that the government sold out their livelihood sources to the foreigner in the shadow of claim that "state land and degraded forest".

Although the locals could not achieve a way to send the company out, they keep continuing their resistance through "silent actions" such as not working for the company and secretly entering the concession area to hunt or collect forest products. In this sense, the locals not only reject to participate in such a development scheme, but they also consider this scheme as an obstacle to their living. In addition, they criticized the government that sold land to the company by ignoring their living and wanting them to be slaves to the Chinese company with a very small wage and bad working conditions.

Overall, the study can points out that since the area is rich in natural forest resources and abundance of land, small population, long-lasting war, insecurity and no market demand, the local people never had interest to take any form to manage the natural resources in the region. However, the way that the local people practice their livelihood strategies with land and natural resources for many generations implies that it is a very small contribution to the natural destruction. As the earlier description, even though the paddy rice fields and NTFP are very significant to their lives, they cultivate land and collect NTFP only for their home consumption. In other words the locals use natural resources for only their basic needs. Moreover, the locals began to be concerned about natural resource decline due to increasing multiple users and called for protection through community based natural resource management since they had a chance to participate in the commune development planning process.

Remarkably, the development policy of the state is a vertical, monopoly management system in which the state has full control over land and forestry in the Kingdom. Additionally, the land reform policy tends to favor intensifying agricultural production through privatization of land and forestland at a large scale level for long-term exploitation. The central privatization of the land sector for agro-industrial

production of tree plantations is to attempt to boost the nation economy with little chance given to the locals' participation in natural resource management and the development process. Within this policy, a million hectares of forestland will become commercial mono tree plantations. There is no doubt that Cambodia would be very nice with straight rows of uniform trees and a green image on a million hectares of land. However, it should be wondered how much the locals can benefit from such a green image. Yet the negative impacts on the local livelihoods and health, wildlife, and natural environment need to be assessed.

In Cambodia, regarding "economic growth" and poverty alleviation, the state highly exercises its power to control over natural resources and people. As this study found the land management is monopolized which is based on the claim that all natural resources in the national boundary belong to the state. Such a claim is not only found in a post war and poor country like Cambodia, but also can be found in many countries in this world. The claim all forestland as "state property" is often prominently exclusive and inclusive power of the state in resource utilization. Such power can be seen through the establishment of land and forestry management mechanisms, boundary demarcation, law and regulations, and forest and land classification. These notions can be clearly echoed by the concept of "territorialization" offered by Peluso and Vandergeest. Peluso and Vandergeest (1995) explain that "territorialization" is about excluding or including people with particular geographic boundaries, and about controlling what people do and their access to natural resources within those boundaries.

As a post war nation, the Cambodian state commits to develop its economy through accepting political democracy and multiple approaches in order to gather involvement from different stakeholders, including international donors, development agencies, NGOs, and local people in the development process. Since the 1993 election the government adopted democratic politics that are in the line of international human rights organizations and some western countries. In doing so, Cambodia has been seen as democratic country in which the leader comes to power through democratic election. The country has freedom for political, social, economical and environmental action.

The decentralization policy is also made and implemented with the favor of many international donors. With technical and financial support from those donors some rural infrastructure was improved and developed. Within this decentralization framework, many non-governmental organizations, both international and national, have a chance to operate their projects in every where of the country. Moreover, the local people become essential actors of rural development that is the favor of international development agencies and donors. Through this decentralization acceptance, Cambodia has been provided financial support for rural development and poverty reduction of around US\$600 million each year since the mid-1990s.

More significantly, economic development has also been committed to by the government through integration into the regional and global economies. This economic development approach has drawn the attention of both national and international investors to do their businesses in many sectors in Cambodia. Amongst others, the natural resource sector has been highly invested in by those investors to accumulate their profits in the context of a market-oriented economy. Natural resources such as land, forestry, fishery, mining and so forth were often exploited to feed market demand. Such natural resource exploitation is too often intervened upon by exclusive power of the state in the form of privatization of the resources to firms or individuals. This economic development process can hence be seen as “neo-liberalization” in which the “neo-liberalist” state is often advancing *governance, privatization, enclosure and valuation* of natural resources by leaving the natural resource dwellers behind.

## **6.2 Theoretical Discussion of the Findings**

In this section, I attempt to discuss some perspectives of the findings that could reflect on literature and theoretical perspectives which were reviewed for this study. Cambodia is considered as a post war and poor country in the region as well as globally. Currently, Cambodia is attempting to integrate itself into the regional and global economic and social development process. Regarding economic development for growth, the Cambodian government introduces a number of state reform programs in order to attack interests of international donors and investors.

The Cambodian government attempts to expand its power to control over and exploit natural resources to fulfill the demands of “economic growth” and the global market. The granting of economic land concessions can be seen as a form of mobilizing land and forestland in economic development in recent years. Those land concession grants were claimed to be the good will of the government in reforestation of degraded areas and poverty alleviation. In reality, a rapid increase in investment in economic land concessions in the form of profit oriented industrial development is dynamically excluding and cornering the existing community rights and destroying natural forest, wildlife and other ecosystems in nature.

The power expansion of the government for controlling and managing natural resources within the national boundary by establishing certain structures, laws, regulations closed to Scott (1998) who offers the concept of simplification as a form of knowledge and control. Currently, all kinds of natural resources are categorized and managed by the state, such as land, forest, water, mines, gas and so forth. Focusing on forest and forestland resources in O Tanoeng community, the local people and the states have different interests. The state uses forest and land resources for commerce to feed the national economy through a privatization method, while most of the local people use them for subsistence for many generations.

Forest and forestland are claimed as “state property” by the government and then privatized in order to exploit these resources. For example, in accomplishing the 2001 Land Law and the 2005 Sub-Decree on State Land Management, a million hectares of forestland in Cambodia was allocated to companies for commercial purposes. In O Tanoeng community, 9,800 hectares of forestland were given to a Chinese company for 70 years of exploitation. This is like what Bromley (1991) argues - that the governments claim natural resources as “State Property” to intend to use these resources to accumulate the capital needed for maintaining the governments’ expenditures and to gain benefits for other purposes. Neumann (2005) also states that modern states claim sovereignty over the land and natural resources within their territorial boundaries and thus sole authority to regulate their use. Similarly, Cleary and Eaton (1996) point that land reform programs are to ensure exploitation as much as possible because they provide security for those investors doing their business.

Since aid donors and development planners were heavily committed to participatory approaches, the Cambodian government trends toward decentralization and redefinition of its role to be a provider of an enabling environment in order to account for international donor policies. In doing so, the government is able to pump millions of US dollars per year from international donors for supporting development projects at the community. The decentralization policy was politically introduced in order to authorize power to the local government and to promote rural development through local participation. With this political development reform, Cambodia has been popular amongst international donors and development agencies. Those donors and agencies have continually provided financial assistance of around US\$ 600 million per year since the mid of 1990s to strengthen the implementation of this decentralization policy.

With this assistance, Cambodia has achieved some specific results in rural development and natural resource management, including small-scale infrastructure, forestry communities, fishery communities, etc. This visible achievement that can be pointed out here as the government has tried to include the local people in the rural development processes. Through my study with the O Tanoeng village, Kbal Damrey commune, Kratie Province; the villagers have a chance to participate in the local development planning process and share some small amount of contribution in cash and labor in the local development projects. For example, in community digging pond project, most of O Tanoeng villagers were asked to contribute 3,000 to 6,000 Riel per household. Some NGOs were also found that they have a chance to work at the grassroots level. Therefore, looking from this corner, we may consider the decentralization policy of the Cambodia government seems to work well, because it gained the local people, NGO and donors in the process.

However, if we carefully look at the development practice of the Cambodian government, we may see that the government strongly believes in the centralized natural resource management more than community-based natural resource management. In other words, natural resources in a certain area where the government intends to privatize, it will ignore local resource management systems and rights of access of those local people. It can be considered that the government exercises its power to control over natural resources and then exploits the resources in the form of

profit oriented industrial development. The forest management initiative at the community of O Tanoeung can be reflected to this above critique. The community forestry of O Tanoeung was proposed by the local people through the commune development planning process and approved by the local authorities. Although this project was supported by NGOs and mobilized through funds from DANIDA, it has been ignored by the government taking the area sought as a community forest to grant as a concession to a company.

Therefore, the decentralization policy implementation of the Cambodian government has been politicized to gain support from international development agencies and donors. This manner is very much similar to what Benjaminsen (1997) found in Mali in the early 1990s. Benjaminsen pointed out that the Malian government retained its centralized structures, and it paid lip service to "decentralization" in response to intermittent demands for a less centralized structure, but little change actually took place. In fact, these changes are not only encouraged, but may sometimes also be imposed by foreign aid donors. The forestry community initiative in O Tanoeung village is clear to this argument.

The central government overrode local community initiatives for the "sustainable" management by authorizing Chinese company investment in the forestland in favor of economic development, even though the land was sought as a community forest. The central government did not respect the locals' decision in creating a forestry community in their commune. In this particular case, the local authorities of Kbal Damrey commune, who are considered as significant service providers in the local community, are not accountable to The O Tanoeung villagers, but they are accountable to themselves and superior authorities within the structure of the government. This means that the local authorities do not represent the local people, but they are likely to represent the upper government and support the government's aim to be successful by causing the locals to suffer. This case can be an example of what Agrawal and Ribot (1999) state; that decentralization cannot be effective if the lower actors are not accountable to their constituents.

The O Tanoeung community's livelihoods depend heavily upon subsistence agriculture and non-timber forest products. Facing the encroachment and exclusive rights of economic land concessions, the community voiced their opposition to the

presence and activities of concessionaires, and called for action to safeguard their sources of livelihoods. In responding to the impacts of this unwanted development scheme of O Tanoeng villagers came up with different forms of resistance. To protect their farmland they started early to strongly protest against the company to through collective action to stop bulldozers and petitioning local, district and provincial authorities. Finally, the protest melted down when the provincial governor facilitated between the company and the local people by giving paddy rice fields back and leaving some space beyond the rice fields for the locals.

The protest seems weaker than what Lohmann (1996) investigated in Indonesia and Thailand in the context of a globalizing pulp and paper industry. They found that the locals came up with different forms of opposition, such as petitioning district authorities, members of parliament, and cabinet members; holding rallies; speaking out at national level seminars; blocking roads; and marching on government office property; and other means, including ripping out eucalyptus seedlings, chopping down eucalyptus trees, stopping bulldozers, and burning nurseries and equipment. In contrast, the O Tanoeng protesters were trapped by the power of “state property”. They accept that those natural resources are the state property, and the state has exclusive rights to control, exploit and privatize.

However, following the protest, they individually kept up resistance through not working for the company, cutting down planted trees, secretly entering the concession area to hunt or collect forest products. These resistance strategies are to avoid confrontation with the powerful actors (government and company). Thus, I agree with Bryant and Bailey, (1997) who found that many grassroots actors nonetheless adopt strategies that aim to minimize any adverse effects while at the same time avoiding confrontation with powerful actors. These resistance strategies refer to what Scott (1985) calls ‘everyday forms of resistance’.

In the context of unwanted development which corners the rights to use natural resources, some of the O Tanoeng people changed their livelihood strategies from NTFP collectors and hunters to be workers for illegal loggers. Since the concession company came to occupy a large forestland area, the illegal logging activities have taken place in other areas. Thus, some villagers take that opportunity to earn money through working for those illegal loggers instead of going to collect forest



resources and hunting. It can be said that these people have taken advantage of a new economic opportunity offered by illegal loggers. This would agree with Hirsch (1990) who mentions the poor may take advantage of new economic opportunities generated by the capitalistic market. However, in O Tanoeng community the context is different from Uthaihani province. The farmers in Uthaihani province diversified into upland cash crop cultivation in order to take the opportunity offered by the market, while The O Tanoeng villagers do not have such an opportunity, but they have temporary employment offered by illegal loggers.

### **6.3 Implications and Policy Recommendations**

Forest communities are heavily dependent on land and forest resources, and landlessness has been considered as a main root cause of widespread poverty in rural Cambodia. Since numbers of economic land concessions are increasing, forest communities' access to land and natural resources are further limited. This study has concluded that economic land concessions have not proven to be an effective way of promoting development that benefits the majority of Cambodia's population. In contrast, they are compromising the livelihoods of forest communities in favor of the enrichment of the few, as well as foreign business interests. The affected communities often cannot rely on the government mechanism to solve their problems. Relevant authorities have not fulfilled their duty to uphold and protect the rights of forest communities to own land and use forest resources. This does not reflect positively on the accountability of state institutions and access to an effective way of management.

The following recommendations are proposed to address the negative impacts of economic land concessions, respect the rights of Cambodian citizens, and promote the equitable and sustainable use of Cambodia's land and natural resources.

- The government should stop granting economic land concessions to private companies, and review all existing economic land concessions for compliance with the Land Law, Sub-Decree on Economic Land Concessions and concession contracts, and ensure they do not encroach upon land possessed and used by communities, including forested areas. This review must ensure that public consultations and real environmental and social impact assessments are conducted prior to canceling those concessions which do not respect the law affected on the locals and environment.

- The government should take immediate action to monitor and evaluate all economic land concession companies to ensure that they do not violate all kinds of Cambodian law, and respect the workers' rights (labor law).

- Community-based initiatives for land and natural resource management should be prioritized. In the case of O Tanoeng forestry community initiative, the government should provide full support. As the area remains to have some evergreen forest with some good tree species and some kinds of wildlife, the government should allocate at least 1000-2000 hectares of forestland for this community.

- Implementation of decentralization policy should be strengthened. The national government should ensure that the local government has genuine rights to work with the local community. At the present, the local government does not seem to be working independently as the central government always puts pressure on them and orders them to follow its aims.

- If the government cannot avoid the development through using forestland as capital to attract investors to invest in large-scale commercial plantations, the government should seek other alternative methods of granting economic land concessions. My understanding in dealing with the economic land concession promotion is that the government should grant state private land to private companies not exceeding 2000 hectares for their company office and wood processing factory.

In doing so, it does not mean that the company will receive a small piece of land for planting trees for its wood factory, but the government should grant state land to the local people of around 5 hectares per family to plant trees to feed the factory demand. This means the government would play a role as arbitrator between private companies and the local people. The government gives at least 5 hectares of land to the local people with some conditions such as the local people have to make a clear plan of growing trees which is parallel to the company's plan. The plan should be well thought out in regard to environmental conservation. The people can clear land and grow trees for the company with technical assistance from the company. In doing so, the people cannot only grow trees but they can grow some alternative crops on their land. This means that the people can have land for intensifying and diversifying for their livelihood successfully.

The government has to make sure about the timber price as well. It should not allow the company to make any price fluctuations. Besides giving land to the people and to the company, the government has to maintain a part of the forest area for the forestry community, especially the evergreen forest area (Old Forest) which is a good concern for natural forest, water and wildlife. The government can impose tax to the company for land and the export of final wood products that can feed the national economy. For the local people, the government should encourage them to set up a social and development fund to put towards developing the local community. In doing so, the local people have to agree amongst themselves how many percent of their income from the sale of timber products to the company needs to put in the Social and Development Fund.

This method is more complicated than granting a big piece of land to only one private company or one entity. However, it would be an effective way for the local people to participate in development and environmental conservation. The people can work on their own land and don't need to be anyone's slave, but they are slaves only for themselves. This way may directly help to improve the living standard of local people and to reduce poverty in the whole nation.

#### **6.4 Limitation of the Study**

This study attempts to make a primary contribution to learners and researchers of the process of economic and social development in Cambodia. The study tried to look at state and community in natural resource utilization and management, in particular land and forest resources. This study however has some limitations as follows:

The time of the study was constrained. The research was carried out for about three months during November to December is the busiest time for the local people to harvest their paddy rice fields. As the author explained earlier most of people in this village temporarily stay at their rice field-based houses during rice cultivation. Thus, it took a lot time to go to see them at the fields. Yet, I sometime had to wait for them to get back from the field as well. Due to the fact that the economic land concession issues are strongly criticized by civil society, and some international development partners and donors, the information related to the land concessions and

concessionaires were hardly accessed. One more important point that the author failed to do is interview the economic land concessionaire (Chinese company).

This study was placed in the community when the economic land concession had been in the community for about two years. This is considered the first stage or early stage of the project implementation. Thus, the author could not find how this project contributes to the national economy and any achievement made by the company for community. Currently, the local people can still somehow access to forest products, because the forests have not been completely cleared yet. However, the resources will no longer exist as the company is continuing to clear the trees. Therefore, the questions that should be asked are: what will happen to the local livelihoods, health etc. and how will the local people adapt with new situation when the resources are gone? These questions should be fundamental ideas for further study in this community and others that face similar problems.

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## **APPENDICES**

## APPENDIX A

## Economic Land Concession Companies in Kratie and Steng Treng Provinces

<b>Kratie Province</b>		
1	Company Name	<b>Green Island Agricultural Development (Cambodia) Co., Ltd</b>
	Name and Nationality	Mr. Kwok Stanery Kak Kuen, American (At the site is seen only Chinese)
	Address	#10, Street 271, Sangkat Teklaok III, Khan Tuol Kork, Phnom Penh
	Area and Location	9,583 hectares; Sambo District, Kratie Province
	Contract Signing Date	15 March 2006 with MAFF
	Duration	70 years
	Purpose of Investment	Tectona replantation and construct processing factory
2	Company Name	<b>Global Agricultural Development (Cambodia) Co., Ltd</b>
	Name and Nationality	Mr. Kwok Lai Ngan Wan, American (At the site is seen only Chinese)
	Address	#1533, National Road No. 2, Sangkat Chak Angre Krom, Khan Meanchey, Phnom Penh
	Area and Location	9,800 hectares; Sambo District, Kratie Province
	Contract Signing Date	15 March 2006 with MAFF
	Duration	70 years
	Purpose of Investment	Tectona replantation and construct processing factory
3	Company Name	<b>Asia World Agricultural Development (Cambodia) Co., Ltd</b>
	Name and Nationality	Mr. Wan Ylu Ming, Chinese
	Address	#1159, National Road No. 2, Sangkat Chak Angre Loe, Khan Meanchey, Phnom Penh
	Area and Location	10,000 hectares; Sambo District, Kratie Province
	Contract Signing Date	15 March 2006 with MAFF
	Duration	70 years
	Purpose of Investment	Tectona replantation and construct processing factory
4	Company Name	<b>Plantation Agricultural Development (Cambodia) Co., Ltd</b>

	Name and Nationality	Mr. Stanley Kar Kuen Kwok, American (At the site is seen only Chinese)
	Address	#326, Kampuchea Krom Blvd, Sangkat Vealvong, Khan Tuol Kork, Phnom Penh
	Area and Location	9,214 hectares; Sambo District, Kratie Province
	Contract Signing Date	11 August 2006 with MAFF
	Duration	70 years
	Purpose of Investment	Pistacia Chinasis Bunge and other trees plantation
5	Company Name	<b>Great Asset Agricultural Development (Cambodia) Co., Ltd</b>
	Name and Nationality	Mr. Yao Yong Zhong, Chinese
	Address	#326, Kampuchea Krom Blvd, Sangkat Vealvong, Khan Tuol Kork, Phnom Penh
	Area and Location	8,985 hectares; Sambo District, Kratie Province
	Contract Signing Date	11 August 2006
	Duration	70 years
	Purpose of Investment	Pistacia Chinasis Bunge and other trees plantation
6	Company Name	<b>Great Wonder Agricultural Development (Cambodia) Limited</b>
	Name and Nationality	Mr. Kwok Wing, Chinese
	Address	#326, Kampuchea Krom Blvd, Sangkat Vealvong, Khan Tuol Kork, Phnom Penh
	Area and Location	8,231 hectares; Sambo District, Kratie Province
	Contract Signing Date	11 August 2006 with MAFF
	Duration	70 years
	Purpose of Investment	Pistacia Chinasis Bunge and other trees plantation
7	Company Name	<b>Tay Nam (K) Co., Ltd</b>
	Address	Trapeang Sre Village, Pi Thnou Commune, Snuol District, Kratie Province
	Name and Nationality	Mr. Ha Thieu, Vietnamese
	Area and Location	Snuol District, Kratie Province
	Contract Signing Date	18 September 2006 with MAFF
	Duration	70 years
	Purpose of Investment	Plantation of Cassava, Rubber, Cashew and Construction of Processing Factory
<b>Steng Treng Province</b>		

8	Company Name	<b>GG World Group (Cambodia) Development Co., Ltd</b>
	Name and Nationality	Mr. An YANG YIN CHANG, Chinese
	Address	#25, Street 213, Sangkat Veal Vong, Khan 7 Makara, Phnom Penh
	Area and Location	5,000 hectares, Steng Treng District, Steng Treng Province
	Sign Contract Date	18 May 2005 with MAFF
	Duration	70 years
	Purpose of Investment	Agro-industrial crops, animal husbandry and processing factory
9	Company Name	<b>Grand Land Agricultural Development (Cambodia) Co., Ltd</b>
	Name and Nationality	Mr. An YANG YIN CHANG, Chinese
	Address	#3A, Street 271, Sangkat Teuk Tla, Khan Reousey Kev, Phnom Penh
	Area and Location	9,854 hectares; Se San District, Stung Treng Province
	Sign Contract Date	23 January 2006 with MAFF
	Duration	70 years (Seventy Year)
	Purpose of Investment	Agro-industrial crops
10	Company Name	<b>Phou Mady Investment Group</b>
	Name and Nationality	Mr. An YANG YIN CHANG, Chinese
	Address	Village No 5, Chup Commune, Tbong Khmum District, Kampong Cham Province
	Date of Sign Contract	24 January 2006 with MAFF
	Area and Location	10,000 hectares, Se San District, Stung Treng Province
	Duration	70 years
	Purpose of Investment	Acacia, Trincomali wood, and other plantation crops
11	Company Name	<b>SIV GUEK INVESTMENT Co., Ltd.</b>
	Name and Nationality	Mr. Ing Siv Guek, Khmer
	Address	Village No 5, Chup Commune, Tboong District, Kampong Cham Province
	Date of Sign Contract	24 January 2006
	Area and Location	10,000 hectares; Se San District, Stung Treng Province
	Duration	70 years

	Purpose of Investment	Acacia, Trincomali wood, and other plantation crops
12	Company Name	<b>SOPHEAK NIKA Investment Agro-Industrial Plants Co., Ltd</b>
	Name and Nationality	Mr. Men Sopheak, Khmer
	Address	#61, Street 313, Sangkat Beoung Kak II, Khan Tulkoak, Phnom Penh
	Date of Sign Contract	08 August 2005 with MAFF
	Area and Location	10,000 hectares; Se San District, Stung Treng Province
	Duration	70 years
	Purpose of Investment	Acacia, Trincomali wood, and other plantation crops
13	Company Name	<b>Sekong Aphivath Co., Ltd</b>
	Name and Nationality	Mr. Tang Huot, Khmer
	Address	#121Eo, Street 146, Sangkat Phsar Depo II, Khan Tuol Kork, Phnom Penh
	Date of Sign Contract	12 April 2006 with MAFF
	Area and Location	9,850 hectares; Siem Pang District, Stung Treng Province
	Duration	70 years; Siem Pang District, Stung Treng Province
	Purpose of Investment	Agro-industry and animal husbandry
14	Company Name	<b>Sok Heng Company Limited</b>
	Name and Nationality	Mr. Ly Sokheng, Khmer
	Address	#82, Soramarith Street, Veal Vong Commune, Kampong Cham District, Kampong Cham Province
	Date of Sign Contract	27 February 2006 with MAFF
	Area and Location	7,172 hectares; Sesan District, Stung Treng Province
	Duration	70 years
	Purpose of Investment	Acacia plantation and other trees
15	Company Name	<b>Green Sea Industry Co., Ltd.</b>
	Name and Nationality	Mr. Mong Reththy, Khmer
	Address	# 03, Street 53 and corner Street 114, Sangkat Phsar Thmey I, Khan Don Penh, Phnom Penh, Cambodia
	Date of Sign Contract	19 November 2001 with MAFF
	Area and Location	100,852 hectares; Siem Pang and Stung Treng Districts, Stung Treng Province
	Duration	70 years

	Purpose of Investment	Trincomali plantation
16	Company Name	<b>SAL SOPHEA PEANICH Co., Ltd.</b>
	Name and Nationality	Mr. CHHUN KOSAL, Khmer
	Address	Tonlebet Village, Tonlebet Commune, Tonlebet District, Kampong Cham Province
	Date of Sign Contract	20 April 2001 with MAFF
	Area and Location	9,917 hectares; Se San District, Stung Treng Province
	Duration	70 years
	Purpose of Investment	Acacia, Trincomali wood, and other plantation crops
17	Company Name	<b>Cassava Starch Production Co., Ltd</b>
	Name and Nationality	Mr. Keo Vuthy, Khmer
	Address	# 08 Eo, Street 230, Sangkat Phsar Daemkor, Khan Tuol Kork, Phnom Penh, Cambodia
	Date of Sign Contract	13 September 1999 with MAFF
	Area and Location	7,400 hectares
	Duration	70 years
	Purpose of Investment	Agricultural and Agro-industrial crops

Source: [www.maff.gov.kh/economic land concessions](http://www.maff.gov.kh/economic%20land%20concessions); updated in Nov 2008

(Accessed on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2009)



APPENDIX B



Commune Office (Rented a villager' house)



Mobile Market (Villager were some foods)



Police Office

Military Barrack



Forestry Post



A Place of Illegal Sawmill



Trees cut to feed illegal sawmill



Set of Sawmill (Mobile)



Villager is sawing wood for his house construction materials





Road to the Office of Global Agricultural Development Company



Rice harvesting by exchange laborers



Rice Field-Based House



Transporting Rice Products to home



Going hunting in Concession Area



Going searching wild potatoes and crabs

## CURRICULUM VITAE

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1999-2000 Faculty of Pedagogy, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

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2005-2006 Program Assistant in Collaboration of Ministry of Rural Development (MRD) and World Food Program (WFP).

2003-2005 Member of Natural Resource and Environment Advisory Group (NREAG) for the Mainstreaming NRE M Project, Seila Program.

1999 Research Assistant to the Cambodian Human Right and Development Association (ADHOC)

1997-1999 General Secretary of Student Association of Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP), Phnom Penh, Cambodia

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