

Impacts of herbal medicine plants on the poor's livelihoods in Tinh Bien district, An Giang province, Vietnam

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INTRODUCTION

Tinh Bien district locating in a remote area is one of the poorest districts of An Giang province. Agricultural area covers about 88.27% including hill areas and plain areas. This district has two main groups of people, Kinh (70.23%) and Khmer group (29.44%). Most local inhabitants rely mainly on agriculture and from other activities, especially from herbal collection in local hilly areas. Unfortunately, varieties of natural herbal species and its yield are getting less and less.

OBJECTIVES

Investigate impacts of herbal issues on the local residents' livelihoods.

METHOD

* Research site:

The research was conducted in Nhon Hung and An Phu communes, Tinh Bien district, An Giang province, Vietnam

• Data collection:

✓ **KIP:** Interviewees were officers at three levels of province, district and commune, experts, and herbal doctors working at the communities;

✓ **Group discussion:** the poor of Khmer and Kinh group;

✓ **Observation:** To observe herbal collectors, species, habitats, and the preliminary processing



Fig 1: Vietnam map, the Mekong Delta in blue circle



Fig 2: research site (*) in An Giang province, The Mekong Delta

RESULTS

*Importance of Herbal plants:

- Herbs could treat chronic diseases of elderly people such as rheumatism, arthropathy, diabetes, dyslipidemia, insomnia, constipation, high blood pressure, stomach, cough; fever; chicken pox;
- Increased number of patients use herbal medicine due to cheapness and no side-effect;
- Herbs are useful for poor patients due to being free of charge;
- Herbal plants are considered as added income sources and food of the poor.

*Challenges of herbal plants

- Changes in farming systems and climate create negative impacts on herbal plants;
- Communities' perception of herbal medicine conservation is low;
- Effects of training courses on herbs conservation from local government are limited



Croton tiglium L.

Rauwolfia hirsuta L.

Ficus drupacea Thunb.

Centella asiatica

Some typical herb species in Tinh Bien district, An Giang province



An old woman is slicing natural herbs collected from local fields to dry for selling



A shop gathers herbs from local collectors in Tinh Bien district, An Giang

CONCLUSION

- Herbal plants are important for the poor's livelihoods;
- Herbs are facing potential risks.

RECOMMENDATION

Community – based conversation of herbs is considered as a feasible strategy

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



Thanks to Sustainable Mekong Research Network (SUMERNET) for financial support and advices.



Women's participation in Wetland Resource Management: a Case Study in Tinh Bien District, An Giang, Vietnam

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INTRODUCTION

People living in rural areas across the Mekong Delta in Vietnam rely highly on natural resources for their livelihood and well-being. Women are a crucial part of the agricultural labor force in Vietnam and make an essential contribution to national economic development, but this is often not fully recognized by society. Women often don't have an adequate or equal voice in wetlands management institutions, both formal and informal, sometimes resulting from traditional gender stereotyping about women's roles, social prejudices and cultural practices. With this project, we will address the participation of women in decision-making platforms in wetlands resources management and study the underlying factors for their limited representation and participation in multi-scalar wetland management institutions.

OBJECTIVES

- To explore the participation of women in decision-making platforms in wetlands resources management.
- To study the underlying factors for women limited representation and participation in wetland management institutions.

METHOD

Method of Data Collection

- PRA tools: resources mapping, institutional mapping and analysis.
- Semi-structured interviews, focus group discussion.
- Participant observation.

Acknowledgements:

Special thanks to Stockholm Environment Institute through SUMMERNET for financial support (SEI Project Np. 100099/Work Order No. 100099206 (Budget line *2.1)).

Study areas



Fig. Map of An Giang province Vietnam (Note: a) Map of Vietnam; b) Study site).

Two different eco-cultural settings



Fig. Upland land Khmer highly populated area



Fig. Low land Kinh populated area

RESULTS

Agricultural participation: Under different ecological context, local people in two contexts rely differently on natural resources for their livelihood and well-being. However, both Khmer and Kinh women are crucial part in agricultural production.



Fig. Female Khmer is collecting palm fruit juice.



Fig. Female Kinh is collecting mushroom.

Women's participation in decision making platforms

At household level:

- In Kinh family level: women participate at consultative level: they discuss with their husband on agricultural production but men are the main decision makers.
- In Khmer family: women are the main decision makers.

At community:

- In commune meetings and trainings, Kinh women are less involved (only 20-30%) but Khmer women are more active in participating in (50-60%). Khmer women are also more proactive during the meeting or training than Kinh women, they express opinions while Kinh women attend passively. However, Khmer women are disadvantaged in language barrier.
- Women are more involved in the training or meeting related to promoting and trading agricultural products while very few women attend technical training courses.

At institutional level:

- Men outnumber women in water management boards (one of out fourteen are female).



Research team are consulting communal irrigation officer and head of water pumping (both are male)

Underlying factors for women's limited participation

- Social norms.
- Overwhelmed domestic responsibilities.
- Such differences between Kinh and Khmer's participation are rooted from social norms of each ethnic group.

CONCLUSION

Regardless of being a crucial part in agricultural labor force and having significant contribution to household's income, women still lag behind in wetland resources management platforms. There is a slight difference in the participation in public space between Kinh and Khmer women, but both of them are not engaged in making-decision level.