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Contribution of Forest Resources to Rural Livelihood of Local Community in Protected Areas of Vietnam – Case of Thuong Tien Nature Reserve, Kim Boi District, Hoa Binh Province

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Abstract

The limited knowledge on livelihood and importance of forest to residents in protected areas is the reason why forest management practice has not yet achieved conservation and development objectives. It even sometimes causes conflicts between the protected areas and local communities. The research on contribution of forest resources to rural livelihood of the communities living inside or around Thuong Tien Nature Reserve, Kim Boi district, Hoa Binh province bases on two criteria: distance from the household to the forest and household type. The applied methods in the research include analysis of secondary data and survey using participatory rural appraisal (PRA) tools: household survey (one hundred sixteen households), group discussions and expert interviews.

The research results show that there are three approaches to livelihood of residents living inside or around the nature reserve: (1) People develop agricultural production including wet rice cultivation and livestock; (2) People find sources of livelihood in other areas or trading; (3) People collect products from forest and forest land. The household survey results reflect that the major livelihood source in the research area is the exploitation of the forest resources, namely timber, fuel-wood, bamboo and medicinal plants as well as raising animals in the forest. The analysis of the contribution of these forest resources to the total income of the households relates the distance to forest and the household types. The results show that the correlation between total income of the surveyed households and the income from forest and forest land is relatively strong to very strong with a R^2 between 0.375 – 0.787. The research findings also reveal that the nearer people live to the forest the more important forest resources are for their total income. This is especially the case for poor households. Recommendation for solution packages are given with the aim of helping the nature reserve and local communities to promote the implementation of both conservation and livelihood development objectives in the area.

Keywords: Forest resource, livelihood, local community, nature reserve, protected area, Vietnam