

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

People at all levels of Thai Society are currently concerned with environmental protection. These people initiate various activities to protect the environment in response to exploitation of natural resources; soil, water, forest, living organisms and human beings. The root-cause of this environmental destruction is mainstream development policy that places priority solely on economic growth, through the promotion of market-oriented production, material development and emphasis on the value of money along the direction of capitalism.

Degradation of natural resources critically leads to increasing competition among various users. Communities, that once lived peacefully, exploited to sustain consumerist capitalism with full support from the state. Under the state and market mechanism, local people lose their potential access to natural resources and are thus marginalized. They are the poor who have to struggle to meet their subsistence needs (Prasert, Prasit, and Somnuk, 1991; Atchara, 1999).

During the past forty years, the growth-oriented development has caused many adverse effects on the people and the environment. Natural resources, for instance soil, water, forest, and biodiversity, are decreasing (McCaskill; 1997: 35). Moreover, government officials assume that humans and forest can not coexist. They think that the communities, located in the protected forest areas, should be relocated (Chupinit, 1971, Somnuk 1996, in Prasert, 1997).

In response to environmental degradation the Thai government has initiated forest conservation policy with natural conservation projects. Human beings and natural resources are then separated and dichotomized (Mies and Shiva; 1993). In addition, many highland ethnic communities have adopted development projects initiated and supported by the government and non-government organizations. Consequently, their patterns of land use and resource management have drastically changed (Suppachai, 1998). Modernization in short, affects communities at all levels and yields serious impacts on the way of life of different classes, gender, race, and ethnicity in these highland communities.

Among the Karen, natural resource management has a direct relationship with women. This is so because women play a major role in resource management. In the Karen community, women have an intimate knowledge of soil types, seeds, edible and medicinal plants. Women are the caretakers of biodiversity. They play a key role in production especially in her family farm, as well as managing the household economy (Kanjana, 1978; Waralak, 1997; Yos, 1998).

At every stage of a Karen social life there is a ritual offering as a sign and expression of belief in the relationship with the environment where values and sacred spirits dwell. The environment, human beings and all living creatures are inseparable. All have sacred spirits and souls. Human being can exist only in a harmonious relationship with the environment. Therefore, there is an organized system of beliefs and rituals that have been handed down from generation to generation. This system helps both male and female villagers to mutually take care of a balance of the environment: soil, water, forest, and living creatures (Prasert, 1991; DISAC-CM, 1993, Sunthorn, 1999).

In contrary, the concept of mainstream development puts an emphasis on commercial farming and mono cultural production aiming to increase productivity with the help of technological input and intensive use of chemical. This mono cultural agriculture is the result of a dichotomy concept of farming, conservation of species and production of new varieties and patenting (Shiva, 1993 quoted in Withoon, 1997).

Thus the integrated production system of highland communities has been less sustainable because their production is more dependent on seeds from the outside. This causes the loss of biodiversity, which critically affects the production system and leads to marginalization of women from their essential role as producer for subsistence consumption, conservation and reproduction of biodiversity in production (Agarwal, 1992). This is true because mono-cultural production has to depend on means of production from outside. In this method of farming, men play the major role in production.

The modern system of commercial cash crop production has impact on the traditional mode of production. This production has to rely on external means. Reciprocal labor is practiced only in dry rice cultivation. Commercial cropping is practiced in a competitive manner and has to depend on hired workers. Farmer are thus in need of cash to pay wages, and it is difficult to hire laborers as they require a similar wage to those in other occupations.

The increasing need for higher investment and cash has also affected the way of life of Karen people, which was once characterized by subsistence production and now increasingly depends on cash economy. And the cash economy leads to increasing exploitation of the environment. This seriously affects villagers whom depend on the environment: to provide them sustenance. Over exploitation leads to a scarcity of food, land, and water. Moreover, the forest is restricted by the state and villagers are not allowed to collect forest products as in the past. Therefore, some villagers go out to seek non-farming employment to earn cash pushing the youth go to urban areas to work and study (Hayami, 1997)

This research is an attempt to analyze the changes of the system of natural resource management in a Karen community as a whole, with special emphasis on the gender role in resource management in the past and the present. The researcher intends to study how Karen women and men adjust themselves in terms of sustainable

natural resource management amidst the current of mainstream development aiming at modernization and economic growth, and state policies on modern pattern of natural resource management relating to the globalization system.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

- 1.2.1 To study external conditions which effect the way of life and resource management of a Karen village in Hod district, Chiang Mai.
- 1.2.2 To study the Karen gender role in resource management.
- 1.2.3 To study the transformation of gender role and women's adjustment to foster sustainable natural resource management.

1.3 Literature Review and Related Studies

This research can be divided into 3 areas of study: 1.) Development Approaches and Dilemmas; 2.) Gender and Resource Management; and, 3.) State and Local Control over Resource Management.

1.3.1 Development Approaches and Dilemmas

There is a contradiction existing in development approaches during the past four decades of economic growth-oriented development in Thailand. Modernization have impacted on every dimension of society; economic, social, political and cultural. The modernization of development a seriously effected people, the result is that only an urban minority has benefited from such development while the rural majority are still in poverty. These contradictory approaches pay too much attention to only a certain aspect of social life at the expense of others. Moreover, they create the development projects deeply impacting the way of life of local people.

Recently, there is a current alternative approach to development which Anan outline in his book; Local control of Land and Forest : Cultural Dimensions of Resource Management in Northern Thailand (2000: 2-18) differentiates the concept of development approaches placed against economic oriented development or modernization, which are reflected in their strategies and methodologies. He outlines three major approaches; the Buddhist approach, the community cultural approach, and the community rights approach.

First, the Buddhist approach accuses that modernization and cash economy of weakening the cultural base of society. This approach respects to the importance of traditional values and knowledge as a key to the success of their development activities and programs. Moreover, this approach views culture as the moral base of Thai rural society deeply rooted in Buddhism. The achievement of development is to relieve human suffering and to improve the quality of life through self-reliance, self-respect and reliance on local resources. Therefore this approach tends to emphasize cooperative self-help programs in the form of rice bank or cooperative stores.

Second, the community culture approach tends to focus on the collective level in contrast to the individual level, as in the Buddhist approach. The approach claims that community has its own culture and a economy. Furthermore, the approach not only considers culture as wisdom and mode of thinking that can be seen in a form of popular knowledge, reciprocal exchange and sharing, but also as a way of life that is best expressed in terms of harmonious community. Therefore, its activities concentrate in three areas: consciousness raising through people organizations, local knowledge of agroforestry, and the potentiality of folk medicine.

This approach tries to integrate Marxism concept and anarchism. It uses Marxist concepts as a tool to study state intervention and capitalization process in a community. Anarchism concept is used in studying the existing community process, both economically and culturally, under the intrusion of state and capital. Anyway, Chatthip (2001) suggests that the studies of this approach still concentrate on cultural and historical perspectives. It should studied more in economic dimension to understand 1.) how the community is a steadfast and self-reliant institution, and 2.) how community-economic system can produce sufficiently, as well as can reproduce and develop on its own (Chatthip, 2001: 11-26).

Third, the community rights approach recognizes the potentiality of local wisdom and knowledge for fostering a more humane, sustainable, equitable and democratic development. However, this approach considers local wisdom not only a value and belief system but also a way of thinking and system of rationality about the relationships between individuals, society and nature. Furthermore, it concerns two fundamental rights: communal or collective rights of common property, and customary rights in communal organizations and social management of local resources.

This approach concentrate on the strengthening of local control of resources based on knowledge of traditional practices by local organizations that are viable for reproduction through the legitimization of various community rights. It views that traditional practices of landholding were once based on communal structures and kinship systems, while the law stressed on state and individual rights. Therefore, the conflict between local customs and national law occurs and can be found in the competition for control and management of forest between poor villagers, urban middle class and the state.

Presently, in academic discourse, there is a debate between the community cultural approach and the community right approach. The debate begins with defining what is a community and how to study a community. Eventually, the difference is about how to develop a community and how a community manages its own natural resources in self-sustainable way.

The community cultural approach does not directly study natural resources management. Rather it discusses how to use land, water, and forest both directly and indirectly. Moreover, there are 2 main sub-groups of this approach: Non government

organizations (NGOs) and the political economy group of Chulalongkorn University. Both study the change of Thai community in the past. While the latter uses Asiatic mode of production of Marxism as an analytical tool, the former criticizes the structure of market system and capital. Furthermore, the former emphasizes on the balance of self-reliance production and the potential of community on resolving the problem existing in a community. But this does not mean that there is a "clear cut" concept between these two groups because simply they can at times think and act similarly (Benjapan, 2000: 186).

Kulvadee's study (Kulvadee, 1997), is an example of the community rights approach, shows communal resource management of the Karen in "Thaung Yai Narasaun" wild life sanctuary in self-security and equitable management perspectives. She presents that the community has a good regulation on controlling resources utilization, distribution of product, and conflict resolution. Furthermore, they do agriculture in a conservation and sustainable way. The resource management institution of the Karen community arises from spirituality of nature, ancestor spirits, and Buddhism. This establishes patterns or mode of resource management that the intruder will be penalized on spirituality, or damage of their product, sickness, death, etc.

Since the declaration of wild life sanctuary over on the Karen community land, they have had no right to resource management and have had to live under the regulation of the wild life sanctuary. Therefore, the villagers bargain on adjustment of forest management between state and community utilizing co-management.

Benjapan (2000) views the community cultural approach as it presents "Culture is the basis of development". Moreover, it believes that cultural awareness is deeper than economic awareness. And the people's culture as a main instrument to fight against urban culture and capitalism culture. The community cultural way is to find out a new way of life on the basis of traditional community. (Benjapan, 2000: 186-187)

Moreover, Anan (2000: 4 and 2001: 20-24) criticizes that the community culture approach has an anti-state nature. It also resists urban society and industrial development. Moreover, it presents the "picture" of rural society opposed to urban society by viewing rural society as a static ideal type which differs from villagers' view that change is according to social and historical conditions. Consequently, their thought is the idealization of villagers' culture.

In contrast, Jesada's study on "Sustainable land management: a case study of Karen's shifting cultivation in Chiang Mai province", provides an example of the community right approach. He shows that Karen resource management is complex. Karen shifting cultivation does not destroy forest and natural resources, but utilizes a local knowledge as a source of natural resource management. Their management integrates community right, usufruct rights, and ownership into one complex

management system. This is used as example of Karen adaptation that could be an alternative for sustainable resource management. (Jesada, 1999: 125)

When the Karen shifting cultivation came under pressure by the state restricting cultivation area and coercing people to dependence on cash crop production, the villagers have to find out how to adjust their cultivation system. For sustainable production system to exist, people must try to implement permanent cultivation or agro-forestry cultivation. However there are few people who have the potential to carry out sustainable production. Moreover, they solve the problem by helping each other in community forestry management and using their local knowledge for resource management in the community as well. (Jesada, 1999)

Chattip (2001: 12) criticizes that the community rights approach not only limits itself to natural resource management, but also supports and emphasizes community rights or usufruct rights. Moreover, it does not pay much attention to economic mechanism as a whole: every dimension of production, consumption, exchanges of community and the way of further development of community-economy as well.

On the other hand, Anan (2000: 214) points out that the community culture approach emphasizes advocating a kind of populist discourse as a way to strengthen the villagers' power in relation to outside powers. And the success of such discourse is limited only to the promotion of the spirit of self-reliance of closed communities and not yet able to transform into a universal level of collective rights. He also argues that this kind of discourse is based mainly on an idealistic image of community culture, but largely ignores its dynamic nature in the changing context of rural community, particularly in confronting the state domination.

1.3.2 Gender and Resource Management

The study on "Women Environment and Sustainable Development" (Braidotti, 1994) has identified impacts of mainstream development on humans beings, especially women because development did not directly benefit women (Boserup, 1970). On the contrary, development even deprives women from their traditional role because modern agricultural development require technologies appropriate to men. This leads to a division of roles and changes traditional production pattern when men take up the job of women and employ technology.

This condition gives rise to a concept of "Women In Development"(WID), believing that development affect the environment and women are closely related to the environment. This concept further gives rise to the concept of Women Environment and Sustainable Development (WED), recognizing the significance of women and the environment through the role of women in their relationship with the nature and their knowledge of natural resource management. Women have done studies and become organized as movements to protect their rights and protect the work on natural resources.

At the same time, the concept of women in development is widely criticized because it emphasizes women's development. As a result, women are separated and integrated into development project, making it a heavy burden for women, which is a western development concept reinforcing the mainstream development (Shiva and Mies, 1997).

Later, there are groups of women from the Southern countries introducing the concept of "Development with Women for a New Era (DAWN)", suggesting that women in the North and South should look at the reality of women and the impacts of development on them, and to search for alternative appropriate to women. It encourages women to develop the concept of "Gender and Development"(GAD), which represents a transition to not only integrate women in development but to look for their potential in development initiatives to transform unequal social/gender relation and to empower women (Braidotti, Charkiewicz, Hausler, Wieringa, 1994:82, Young, 1997). This study will focus on the equal role of women in development, as well as management of natural resources.

Since the term "Ecofeminism" was introduced by feminist writer, Francise d' Eaubonneir in the mid 1970s, a feminism group (Mies and Shiva, 1993) criticized the mainstream development in which women are seen as the cause of destruction of the environment and development which changes a production system to discriminate women from subsistence production. This subsistence production depends on nature and has women as the source of knowledge and the manager of nature; soil, water and forest and caretaker of bio-diversity for existence of their life, families, and community. This production is changed towards a system that depends on external means of production based on modern technologies proper to men. This dichotomous production for market has to depend on external means and seriously affect women.

There is diversity within the eco-feminism concept. Chairat (1999: 247-261) summarizes and identifies the concept of women movement of ecofeminism into 3 groups: 1.) Classic eco-feminism or cultural eco-feminism or radical eco-feminism, 2.) Social eco-feminism and 3.) Critical ecological/ environmental feminism.

First, Classic eco-feminism or cultural eco-feminism or radical eco-feminism recognizes nature and environment discourse of essentialism that believes in "Women's Nature". It views that women are close and similar to nature because both are oppressed and excluded by men in a patriarchal society. This concept is criticized as gynocentric essentialism because it views women with their own culture or female culture. Furthermore, It considers that not only with female thought lead to conservation and co-exist once with nature, but also the sustainable development is to replace men thoughts and value with women's. This is a dualistic way of thought. Eco-feminist does not destroy hierarchical thinking, it merely reverses hierarchies to become a matriarchy. Moreover, it excludes other sources oppression of such as capital, race, class, and so on.

Second, Social eco-feminism put more emphasise on social dimensions than culture or nature dimensions as classical eco-feminism does. It views that "female", "femaleness", and "women nature" is a social construction. Therefore, it is a dynamic one. Moreover, it recognizes the difference between male and female. But the difference does not mean women are inferior to men. Women's inferiority is men's interpretation in order to dominate women.

Furthermore, materialist/socialist eco-feminism, the sub-group of socialist eco-feminism, view capitalism and patriarchy as the main oppression. It suggests women in the third world or rural areas should have roles on decision making and land utilization because these women are an important basic of production and reproduction both domestic and agricultural sphere. An example of this is the "Chipko" movement in India.

The characteristic of social eco-feminism is an ideal type as presented by Mies and Shiva (1993), because it believes in good society in the past rural India and suggests the alternative of sustainable development under the so call "subsistence agriculture globally". It does not consider other oppressive sources such as race, class, and caste, ect. in analyzing women's oppression.

Third, critical ecological/environmental feminism, for instance, Plumwood (1993: 5) views nature as a cultural identity like sex, class, and race. It is not a pure and simple masculine identity, but the multiple, complex cultural identity of the master formed in the context of class, race, and gender domination. This cultural identity has framed the dominant concepts of western thought, especially those of reason and nature.

Plumwood (1993:5) argues that many element of Platonic reason/nature dualism remain unresolved in modern approach to reason, human identity, and death. "Reason" is a cultural identity in dualism thought and the standing point of the white male middle-class. Therefore, she suggests that we should view women's identity difference from men's. And this difference is a complex one. Moreover, the identity is a social construction not "nature"

Critical ecological feminist also recognize that the gendered character of nature/culture dualism, and of the whole web of other dualisms interconnected with it, is not a feature of human thought or culture *per se*, and does not relate the universal man to the universal woman. It is specifically a feature of western thought. Moreover, human relations to nature are not only ethical, but also political. (Plumwood, 1993: 11)

In "Staying Alive", Shiva (1986) presents women, ecology, and development by starting from the post-colonial period which emphasized and encouraged quality of life development and westernized industrial development. Finally, colonial countries control and exploit resources from developing countries. When development is based on commercial system, resources are commoditized for

economic expansion. This vision bases itself on exploitation and exclude women. (Boserup, 1970)

Shiva criticizes the concept of women in development (WID) which encourage women to find a supplemental income. She argues that this makes women work harder because they have to work both as domestic laborers and wage laborers. The double work impacts their health and status, and it displaces women from productive activities by expansion and development (Shiva, 1986: 3) Development projects destroy not only natural resources, but also women by removing land, water, and forest from their management and control.

Shiva point that out the status of women, especially Indian women, depends on nature for their subsistence and survival. When there is no subsistence production, new production impacts on natural production cycle as well as women, highlanders, and farmers who depend on nature. (Shiva, 1986) The development which destroys human being and nature is a "maldevelopment" (Mies, 1986). And the development that emphasizes on profit has a patriarchal bias. This leads to inequality between men and women. And resistance for equality occurs in a dimension of diversity. "Maldevelopment" is based on nature and women domination.

Shiva also discusses about the relationship between nature and women. She cites that for "Uttra" community thought the forests are sacred areas where "Aranyani" lives. "Aranyani" is the goddess of the forest. And the nature of the forest forms the organizational principles guiding Indian civilization. However when there is logging by the company in the community forests, men become wage laborers in the company. But women, whom depend on nature for survival, resist both the company and the villagers who live inside/outside the community. Sometimes, there is conflict from both sides. Eventually women are the people whom receive the most negative impacts. (Shiva, 1986: 65) Later, these women formed a group called " Chipko Movement". This group tries to save tree alive by holding on to the tree when someone tried to cut it down. They have begun this kind of work at "Grahwal", region of "Uttar Pradesh" since 1970. Now this activity has spread to another part of India. (Shiva, 1986: 67)

From the study of Hutheesing (1990), it shows the changing of the Lisu mode of production. In the traditional production, the Lisu are rice and opium growers. It is a subsistence product where women and men work together in the field equally. When the Thai government declared its opium suppression policy and cash crop development policy, the Lisu were forced to do mono-commercial cropping, e.g., coffee, tomato, cabbage, etc. Therefore their lives have changed to mostly depend on money. The villagers sold their communal property, such as land. And the shaman began to money in exchange for conducting a ritual. Moreover they also have to pay money for their child caretakers. (Hutheesing, 1990: 174)

The changing mode of production of the Lisu is the major cause that transforms Lisu gender relationship into an unequal relationship. But the Lisu women

can adapt themselves better than Lisu men in the cash economy sphere. Some women even make money supporting their children and husbands who do nothing. (Hutheesing, 1990: 175) The mode of production that depends on only money has impacted on the Lisu way of life as a whole. If they don't have money, they need to borrow money and go out to work as laborers (Ibid, 177).

When a tribal community adopts the modern mode of production, relationships with other tribal communities are also affected (Nares, 1995; Apinop, 1996; and Chalernsak, 1998, quoted in Sarintip, 1999.) Moreover, the past development has been dominated by the male concept that did not regard the reality of women, especially in matters relating to natural resource management. Thus, women were completely hindered from playing their roles. (Boserup, 1970; Shiva and Mies, 1993)

In "Impact of deforestation and reforestation program of household survival strategies and women's work: the case of Karen and Lisu in a village of northern Thailand", Shalardchai and Virada (1992) show the way of life of the Karen and the Lisu relating to nature. Both the Karen and the Lisu women have more roles in production than men's. The impact of deforestation and reforestation is scarcity of land. And the cash crop encouragement carried out by the Royal Project has had a deep impact on the community, especially women who have had to work harder. Women engage in every step of production as well as domestic work. Some Karen men go to find jobs at Reforestation Project and Lisu village. Some Lisu move to new place for better life. Each household survives in different way according to their economic status. Women have to work both inside and outside their house (Shalardchai and Virada, 1992: 219).

The study of Thawit (1995) also pointed out that the result of the capitalist modernization and state intervention among the highland communities caused them to be structurally paralyzed in controlling their lives, particularly poor Lisu are alienated, marginalised and losing their senses of identity. This disparity in the gender role of men has become a weakness that caused men to lose their own dignity and social status, while the women had the ability to adapt themselves better than men. This study has shown how the Lisu men have tried to actively participate in rituals, reproducing their ethnic identity and reconstructing their role in today's society.

In "Commercialization Process and Transformation of Sgaw Karen gender role", Sirintip (1999) shows that Karen women have their own knowledge. They work together with men in the production process. When the community is pushed into a commercialization process, men have more opportunity than women to access or learn new knowledge/ technology. However, each villager has a different opportunity and women lose their power and control on resource management. The production once dependent on kinship and community, turns to be dependent on outside influences. The villagers have to manipulate and struggle for survival by integrating traditional knowledge with modern knowledge. Some rich or middle class women sometimes have a higher status than some men (Sirintip, 1999: 141-147).

The study of natural resource management of the Karen in the past emphasizes the potential of local knowledge/wisdom practices as the way of life, beliefs, and custom. It shows the causes of the problem and the way to solve the problem, but some of them lack gender perspective for understanding natural resource management, especially the Karen. In the past, the Karen were a matrilineal and egalitarian society. With the mode of production changing, it is very interesting to study how Karen gender role transformed in resource management in a sustainable way.

1.3.3 State and Local Control Over Resource Management

The traditional way of life of the Karen people has been handed down through generations and able to exist because of its balance and inseparable relationship with the environment; soil, water, forest, and living creatures. It is a reciprocal relationship in the use and care concomitantly (Somnuk, Prasert, Prasit, 1981). The dependence on nature for the survival of the Karen people does not destroy the environment. On the contrary, it helps take good care of the balance of the environment (Uraivan, 1997). Karen communities have an organized system of natural resource management through indigenous knowledge, so much so that they are able to protect natural resources in their communities (Choosit, 1995; Uraivan, 1999). Because of the ways of life of these tribal people, they have a good relationship with nature/environment.

The way of life of the Karen people as in good relationship with nature is expressed in their beliefs and meaning given to the relationship with spirits or souls dwelling in nature. This relationship is thus a valuable system between human beings and the Absolute who is creatively protecting human beings and nature in a balance manner (DISAC-CM, 1993; Yos, 1999)

The modern management of natural resources; soil, water, forest, and living organisms is different from the traditional method. The modern pattern of resource allocation under state policies restricts farmland and the use of resources. Furthermore, it promotes not only conservation projects to separate human beings from the forests, but also commercial cropping that changes the mode of production of community members. This mode of production pushes tribal people to depend on external means and markets. And this leads to division of gender roles and labor (Yos, 1998)

The study of Choosit on "The use of local wisdom in the forest conservation and ecological system to solve the problem of drought in Thailand" presents that northern Thailand, which is a highland area, is a good ecological zone. There are various kinds of plants and animals utilized by human beings. The ethnic groups that live in the highland areas, have sacred areas in the mountains and forests. They have a way of life dependent on nature. They do rotational cultivation, construct firebreak belt, etc. But when there is commercialization in the highlands, highlander change their production from subsistence to commercial cropping. This impacts the

ecological system. The Lua and Karen, experience less impact than other highlanders. And the rotational cultivation of the highlander has a far less impact on nature than the Thai cultivation.

At the same time, Prasert's study (1997), "Transmission of the Body of Knowledge Relating to the Shifting Cultivation System of Karen Community", has presented Karen knowledge of rotational cultivation as both a methodology and a belief system of the Karen. This knowledge is inherited from generation to generation. The Karen divides forest area according to its usage, e.g., rice field, preserved forest area, etc. (Prasert, 1997:139)

In "Ethnoecology of Karen tribe: A Case study of Karen in Thung Yai Narasuan Forest", Pinkeaw (1996) shows that the Karen have diverse knowledge which is based upon respecting nature and dependence on each other. It emphasizes the value which opposes the developmental strategy implemented by the Thai government that emphasizes control and profitability from nature. The government strategy impacts on local knowledge because it holds the view that tribal people are the "destroyer".

Vandergeest and Peluso (1992) criticize territorialization of Thai State policy because it does not protect forest. It protects and controls land use in forests by using laws and regulations. Forest areas are state property. When the state declares a protected area, no one can utilize this area anymore. This is state of control. Anan and Mingson (1993) also criticize the government concept of natural resource management which is different to the local concept. While the state emphasizes "ownership" as western concept, the local emphasizes on "usufruct" land control.

In comparison, other groups such as the Hmong, practice the pioneer swiddening cultivation technique by clearing forest areas and farming it until the soil is no longer useful. Once this happens, they will migrate to other areas (Walker, 1999). The eradication of opium production and forest conservation by the state inspired the development of a program that promotes the commercial production of cash crops as a means of increasing income for ethnic minorities. This policy was well accepted by opium growers who had experience of the commercial market. They turned to the production of cash crops as particularly cabbage, tomato and fruit trees covering vast land through out the hill areas. The production of cash crops ended up encouraging higher usage of chemical fertilizer, pesticides and water. As a result, a conflict arose between the lowland and highland ethnic groups in the case of the Hmong of Ban Pa Kluai and the lowland farmers in Chomthong District in Chiangmai (Anan, 1996)

Within the context of increasing resource competition and conflict, the ethnic minorities have campaigned for protection of their rights to control the management of natural resources. They have formed movement such as Mae Wang Watershed Network to campaign for the return of rights to resource management and power to local communities. This network joined other watershed networks in the

North and formed the Northern Farmer Development Network (NFDN) (Pratuang, 1997; Anan, 1996). Through the NFDN; grassroots people, scholars and NGOs have joined hands to campaign for the involvement of local people in resource management. And through recent social movements of those who have been struggling for the rights to access and control of their natural resources. They have ultimately been able to participate in managing those resource in a sustainable way.

1.4 Research Framework

The research entitled "Transformation of Karen gender role in resource management" is a study of changes of the role of women and men and the subsequent adjustment in natural resource management. The main concept used in this study is "Gender role", especially gender power relationship, which has undergone various changes and adaptations in each era. The changing relationship relates and impacts families and communities. Moreover, gender role correlates with power relation of production, belief system, and domestic and public sphere. When the production and belief system as well as domestic and public sphere have changed, the gender role also changes accordingly.

Furthermore, it focuses on local knowledge of community in a close relationship with the environment. It also studies adjustment of the community in natural resource management that separates relationship between human being and the environment on the change of mode of production that totally depends on external means and market. It studies the impact of state policies on natural resources management which lead to a loss of biodiversity and resource. The study examines the increasing internal differentiation resulting from the penetration of market mechanism, and has an increasing differentiation among social classes having an effect on the gender role and transformation of gender relations. The study also show how women adjust themselves for sustainable natural resource management at the household and community level.

The conceptual framework will integrate a complex structure of relationships which include functional relations of physical resources, structural relationships between various social groups in local communities, and processual relationships within subsistence and commercial systems. Moreover, the structural relationships is quite essential in understanding the management of new technology that can leads to the most four important goals of resource management: i.e., social equality, resource stability, and sustainability and gender equality. (Kanok and Anan, 1993: 48) (see figure 1.1)

BOUNDARY OF COMMUNITY - LEVEL PRODUCTION SYSTEM

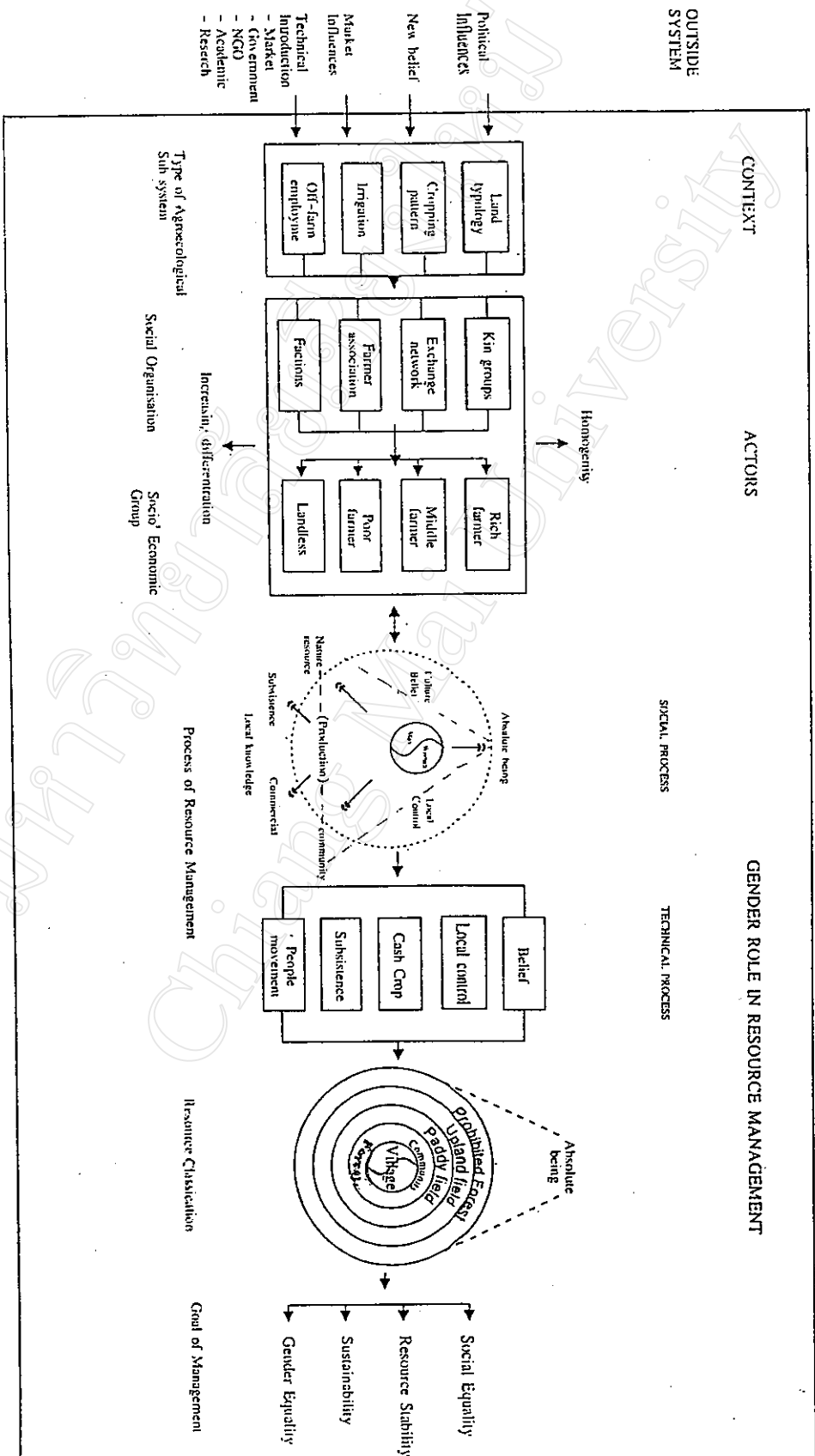


Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework of Gender, Resource Management Process at Village Level
Adapted from: Kanok Reskasem and Anan Ganjanapan (1993)

1.5 Expectations

1. To learn gender role in resource management in the context of the Karen community in the past and present.
2. To understand the potential of both men and women in transformation to natural resource management.
3. To apply this knowledge to formulate guideline on sustainable natural resources management.

1.6 Scope and Methodologies

1.6.1 Location of the Study

Ban Dok Dang is a Karen community in the Hod district, of Chiang Mai Province. It was established 64 years ago. There are 75 households in this village. At the beginning, Ban Dok Dang was rich in natural resources; soil, water, forest, and different living organisms. When the population grew, the need for resources also grew. In addition, neighboring villages felled trees and cleared forest for opium and cash crop cultivation, which require large tracts of land. This land clearing causes drought.

In 1983, there was a project to build a road into this village to transport cash crops to market, and there were policies on farmland control, suppression of opium cultivation, declaration of conserved forest and watershed area to prevent the loss of the remaining resources. These policies seriously affected Ban Dok Dang. Its mode of production based on local wisdom harmoniously and reciprocally relating to the environment has undergone changes. Villagers, both men and women have turned to cash cropping, such as the production of cabbage, tomato, chile, and cucumber. This farming system has to rely on capital, technologies, and the market.

In search of capital, villagers all into debt and have to seek non-farming employment to earn additional income. The younger generation has to move to live in urban areas. At the same time, the villagers have set up a rice bank, women's group, consumer co-operative shop and an association for the conservation of the environment. This is how the villagers adjusted themselves to cope with such a situation. Given these conditions, therefore, Ban Dok Dang is selected as a location for this study.

1.6.2 Unit and Level of Analysis

The unit of analysis of this study is gender role in resource management. Therefore, it analyzes the changing roles and the adaptation of gender at the household and community level, which is the expression of villagers in solving their problems and the meaning of resource management.

Moreover, the framework will take households as a basic unit of cultivation but will not consider an individual farm households as a unit of analysis. In actual cultivation a household does not independently mobilize resources. For some resources, it has to rely a great deal on its relationships with others. Furthermore, a household shares many similar patterns of management in production with others who are in the same socio-economic condition. In this sense, an appropriate unit of analysis will be households of a particular socio-economic group, namely rich, middle-class, poor, and land less households.

Furthermore, the study and analysis of Ban Dok Dang as a whole will comprise groups of people as follows: 1.) Women, both young women and housewives, who play roles in natural resource management in their family and community 2.) Men who play roles relating to resource management within the community and their involvement with outside agencies in resource management, and how it effects gender role in resource management.

Women's groups have been organized as an alternative in an attempt to adapt to a different way of making a living. The study will assess, when the role of women changes, what the context in which the women's role has been changed and how women adapt themselves in the community to coexist with the environment in a sustainable manner.

The study will periodize and divide gender roles in natural resource management into 3 periods according to the changing mode of production. Three periods are as follow:

1. *Period of Subsistence Production(1936-1974)* In this period, villagers in Dok Dang Community did rotational shifting cultivation. Their lives mostly depend on natural resources. Men and women helped each other in the production process. It was a subsistence production period.

2. *Period of Transition to Commercial Agriculture (1975-1992)* Several outside organizations provided many development projects, e.g., primary school establishment, road construction, and forest plantation. This is a changing period when the Karen inclined to increasingly depend on outside material.

3. *Period of Commercial Production and Local Reaction against Forest Encroachment of Thai State (1993-Present)* Dok Dang village has entered commercialization process production. The outside promotes and encourages the villagers to practice modern agriculture and the growing of cash crops. Men have major roles in this period.

These periods have had an impacted on gender roles in resource management significantly. The study emphasizes on the third period because the Karen gender role in resource management goes under a critical transforms.

1.6.3 Data and Method in Gathering Data

There are two type of data gathering methods.

1. Quantitative Data is the information of the community focusing on the settlement of the village; the number of households and changes in the mode of production that is linked to external forces; the impacts of problems on daily income and expenditures; and the time allocation on gender roles related to division of labor in household and community.

2. Qualitative Data is the in-depth information on gender role in the villagers' way of living and its expression through rituals, their background all steps of organizations and the production and meaning of rituals given by leaders and participants on gender role within the ritual.

Method of Gathering Data will be a Participatory Approach.

- **Observation:** this will be by participation in daily activities of the villagers on gender role in relation to the environment and the Absolute.
- **Participate in rituals** to observe and study gender roles in the ritual itself and its elements linked to the beliefs and expression of the villagers.
- **Informal interview** about natural resource management, history, the way of life, and the transformation of gender role in resource management.

1.7 The Organization of the Study

This thesis is organized into six chapters. Chapter I presents the background and objectives the study, the relevant literature review, the research framework, the expectations, the scope and methodology, and the organization of the study.

Chapter II describes characteristics of the studied village and the historical background of the studied village during three distinct periods to set the context for the study. The first period is the subsistence period (1936-1975). The second period is the transition to commercialize (1975-1992). And the third period is the commercial and local reaction against forest encroachment by the Thai State (1993-Present).

Chapter III identifies the changing resource management at the household level and describes how class-differentiated households manipulate their own resources, especially on subsistence and cash crop production: the rich, middle-class, poor, and landless households. Furthermore, the chapter also cites how they divide the domestic and cultivation work for each sex and who has access and control to resources in each household.

Chapter IV identifies the changing resource management at the community level. Describing indigenous wisdom as are a presentation of their knowledge applied in various aspects of daily life. This wisdom is related to their belief and the practice

of tradition and custom in the cycle life of human beings from the womb to the tomb in relating to natural resources management. And the integration of villager's traditional belief into natural resources management of the community resulting in the new patterns of resources management which are the result of the lesson learned of the resources management and development in the past giving new meaning and practice in the present age. At the same time, the people have setting up a village committee comprised of both women and man to develop their village.

Chapter V analyzes, identifies, and then relates some key conditions that influence the transformation of the Karen gender role on resource management by dividing into 3 sections: agricultural production, community level, and political sphere. Each section describes how the Karen gender role transform resource management gradually by comparing with related study.

Chapter VI concludes the thesis by relating the theoretical and empirical material presented throughout the thesis. Furthermore, this chapter also discusses about the findings theoretically, and recommends development policy for highland communities.