

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **Introduction**

#### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Community forest management in Thailand has been aware publically as an important issue since the past two decades, relating to both cooperation and disagreement interaction between the communities in the forest and the related government agencies. Such interaction has been viewed under the similar natural resource management, but at different point of views. Looking back to the first era of forest concessions, communities in many areas were aware of a proactive development for forest protection and conservation. Consequently, more than 15 community movements in the North were derived by the people in order to force a cancellation of the forest concessions. As a result, the affected communities in the forest have formed their opposition movements asking for justice from the state's natural resource management (Boonchai, 2005 : 238).

In 1987, formations of the people movement emerged, consisting of academic scholars, non-government organization activists, and students, and there were some criticisms against the logging business. Coincidentally, flooding attacked many Southern provinces at the end of 1988 as a result of deforestations. That event caused the public to put a pressure on the government to cancel its concessions throughout the country in 1989. At the same time, the opposition against the capitalists who rented the Huai Kaew Community forest, Mae On district in Chiang Mai Province, and intruded upon the forests previously utilized by the villagers. The community leaders with the students' mutual cooperation made complains to the state agency till the former director-general of the Royal Forest Department cancelled the forest lease agreements previously made with the private sector. Eventually, he made an official announced for the Huai Kaew forest as the first community forest of Thailand.

Based on the villagers' fights to protect the forests in many areas of the country, the logging monopoly concession became an attractive issue of many non-government organizations to join anti-concession movements and seek for an alternative resource management by the community. They coordinated with various communities that functioned to conserve the forests in many areas through their concept and experience exchanges among the community leaders. Since 1990, the community movements for forest management have been developed with strong cooperation from the scholars with a leading role as the main character (Boonchai, 2005: 239). Such evident was publically accepted publically as a social reference of strong community culture, becoming the intellectual issue or body of knowledge for policy movement of community forest act as a relating solution of community folkways and ecological system.

In 1996, there was a meeting held for the bill community forest drafting, involving the Royal Forest Department's officials, the board of juridical council members, scholars in forestry and Social Sciences, non-government organizations and community organizations (Boonchai, 2005: 240) into account. That meeting was chaired by Prof. Dr. Prawet Wasi, while Prof. Dr. Bovornsak Uwanno was accepted as the chief of the bill drafting team. Afterwards, several public forums were organized for public hearings and brain storming with an important issue of "there should be a community forest in the conservation area or not. In 1997, there was an open forum for a public hearing, of which the result determined a collaboration to revise the Bill by the village networks, and in 2000, the community forest bill was proposed by 50,000 people to the National Legislative Assembly under section 170 of the Constitution (Marukapitak, 2004: 59). Then, the Assembly voted to pass the bill and became the Community Forest Act with a vote of 52 to 2 on the 21<sup>st</sup> of November, 2007. However, the drafted bill was not eventually passed the motion of the Senate Commissioner, causing a stagnation of legal and policy drive.

The above-mentioned whole empirical evident was marked as the first people movement and community right to push the bill for resources management. This movement was made known publically based on the provable fact of the society. There has been a long campaign with a prominent point amongst academics, who applied the body of knowledge from the field research in such conceptualization. The

scholars, private developers, and villager philosophers participated in the body of knowledge development carefully with learnt lessons as its foundation (Santrasombat, 2004; Sanae Jamrik and Yos Santrasombat, 1993). A research on "the Community Forest in Thailand and Development Guidelines" was part of their application (Marukapitak, 2004: 59).

The researcher noted that public organizations have tried with directive actions to strengthen the academic work, based on research experiences with good lessons about the community potential and rights of forest conservation and protection. Such actions could support the legislation draft systematically with social movements and state negotiations. Although, such actions consumed 22 years since 1991 till the time being in 2013. At last, there was not any positive and decisive response from the relevant authorities.

However, the researcher had an opinion that it might be slightly hopeless to return and reprocess the draft bill of Community Forest Legislation. Looking back to the reverse phenomenon, those people involved in that process might be exhausted through their long period of fighting for the bill. In the future, there might be some changes with some directions, over some period of time in order to alter the policy for change. This might be difficult to assume.

Turning back to the first era of Community Forest Management in 1989, it was a flourishing year. The communities were awakened to forest protection with connections to and expansion of network widely, based on their old understanding. Since 1997, the community forest management's situation has been scarcely developed. There were still unclear empirical data on numbers of community forest areas, whether they were trending to increase or decline.

Studying from the document analysis, it was found that numbers in the quantity of forest community areas of each institute/organization were not consistent, and most of them were only under estimate. For instance, the survey data on Northern community forest in 1990 indicated that there were about 30 communities involving in forest conservation and protection (Boonchai, 2005: 246). In 1995, the data indicated that there were 400 community forests, while in 2000, there were at least 700 community forests. At the time being, the number has been expanded to a thousand. In the Northeast, there were hundreds of community forests (Rakyuthitham,

2000). In 2001, they found 1,221 sites of the community forest areas (Klinkhajorn, 2001). The Community Forestry Training Center in 2002 found that there were more than 2,000 community forests in the North, 1,000 in the Northeast, and 700 in the South. The East, West and Central areas, all together, had about 500 community forests (Office of the United Nation, 2002: 30), while Santasombat (2000: 101) found that there were thousands of communities which preserved and protected community forests.

Considering the data in quantitative terms, it seemed that the numbers of community forests increased continually. However, the Thailand Environmental Institute's study on forest and community indicated that there were no conclusions yet, whether the forest that was managed by communities could solve the forest encroachment or not. In the past, there were many examples showing that the communities had destroyed the forest resources and gained the benefits without thinking of forest recoverability. Some communities gathered together to protect the forests and saw the importance of resources which would affect the communities in the future. (Thailand Environment Institute, 2003:70).

In the past, forest management in some communities was found impressively progressed by involving the community members to participate in protecting the forests with various activities such as, wildfire protection, fire buffer building, and supplementary forest cultivation with rule and regulation establishment for protection and utilization. There were also organizational groups which took a responsible role in community forest protection with their learning networks at different levels of management in order to clearly strengthen and solidify the management issue. The evolution and emergence of networks showed strong, clear and concrete management. A study on the process of community forest management as being conducted by the Community Organizations Development Institute (ITD), the Department of Environmental Quality, Ministry of Natural Resources, and the community network organizations, (2550) indicated that the substantial natural resource management was decreasing with lower concentration than before. Therefore, such community forest management process might be summarized as the following six main points.

- 1) Most of the community leaders had work engagement and family care duty with less time to manage the forest as before.

2) The community forest committees' activities were not continuous. The majority of the pioneers in the first stage became the elderly, and wanted to transfer their role to their new generation to carry on the activities.

3) There was minimum funding for activities.

4) Only some certain rules and measures of forest management can be reinforced and put into practice.

5) The symbolic rites and traditional measures of forest conservation began to decline, because the ritual leaders were aging, resulting in disruption of ritual practice for forest protection.

6) The way of life of community members has shifted to non-agricultural occupations, with longer depending on the direct benefits from their forests.

The study of the qualitative data was reflected by leaders and members in the community. The three empowered communities, which were well known and accepted in forest management, found that the processes of the community were decreasing at the level of intensity. The three communities' leaders shared their opinions as follows.

1. The community activities were not proceeded continuously. Most of them were the pioneers at the initial stages and they were aging. So they needed the new generations to coordinate the work. The leaders of the three communities reflected the same point of view. They lacked time to manage the community forests because they needed to earn their living.

2. The budget to support the activities was limited.

3. Regulations and rules in forest management could only be practical in some points. Customs and rituals, which were once the crucial symbols of forest protection, were gradually disappearing because of the ritual leaders elderly stage. It affected the continuation of the rituals which then stagnated.

4. The life styles of the community members have changed because they changed their occupations to work outside the agricultural sectors. Therefore, they did not need the benefits from the forests directly.

The proposed bill phenomenon of the community forest at the policy level and the progressive situation in community forest management created doubts. Even



though, in the past, the descriptions were screened by the scholars and based on academic data, such phenomenon still existed. It could be the way or the situation that the forest management was effective, but it could not maintain this potential. Certainly, the cause for management through laws was important. Sovereignty and politics still needed to sustain the status of a main manager, and that would be inconvenient to the movement.

However, there were doubts about the influence of political power. The power of knowledge and the facts from academic research could partially weaken the state sovereignty, but why it did not happen. It could be a problem to apply any appropriate body of knowledge to explain the phenomenon. It might imply that the community forest management was more complex and dynamic than the use of any indigenous body of knowledge to explain. It turned into a weak point that the sovereignty refused to accept the community forest management concept. So, there should be a need to review and investigate the foundation of thoughts and paradigms behind such management.

Additionally, the researcher noted that whether the issue of body of knowledge was relevant to the community practice or not. Such refined theoretical and practical knowledge, which have been acceptable to the people and various agencies involved in forest management, might be applicable for determining the policy and explicitly expanding in concrete terms. Controversially, there was a reflection, either as a matter of argument, power and concept disputes, or environmentally ideological reconciliation of the many groups of involved people that caused a stagnation situation.

Based on such doubts, the researcher formed a set of basic assumptions that the dispute and unacceptable causes toward the drafted bill of community forest might be the communicable gap between the former “traditional knowledge’s description, interpretation, and real practice of the communities in forest management. When the context was changed dynamically, and the knowledge in such context was explicitly described in the different context at different time, and irrational phenomenon could happen. Moreover, there might be some changes occurring within the context of community lifestyle with sophisticated elements associating with the external context and factors. Consequently, the people used to beneficially rely on the forest and

currently they have converted to non-agricultural occupations. So, most people today may not feel reliable on the forest anymore, and their life may no more depend on the forest. Therefore, the knowledge applicable to explain the relationship between people and forests was not sustained and reflected the changed phenomenon. Hence, there should be some reinvestigations on the above-mentioned issues in order to prevent the loss of empirical phenomenon and paradigm on community forest management.

The researcher noted that some body of knowledge explanations of the forest management had some weaknesses for generalization. The researcher found that most scholars had discovered and tried to explain positively the community culture's potentiality with a high degree of confidence. As a consequence, three aspects have been overlooked as follows:

1. It may overlook the complex of interaction between the community and different ecosystems, both human and natural ecosystems. Those are such as high land community forest management, indigenous and local communities nearby the rivers, and coasts. The individual different communities in each ecosystem have their own different ideology, body of knowledge, and practical methods toward the resource foundations.

2. It may overlook the diversity of ecosystems and ethnic groups that are diverse in Thai society, such as hill tribe communities consisting of Karen, Hmong, Mien and Lau. Each of the tribes have various distinctive beliefs. Therefore, the forest management guidelines should not be the same in practice. Each ethnic group has its own unique folkway, cultural conditions and body of knowledge in forest management.

3. The misleading of the dynamic situations occurring in various communities with conditions that may be changeable to time and spaces. Such situations may cause some abuses in the body of knowledge's application appropriately. Therefore, knowledge of the forest should not be regarded as a stable paradigm. It depends on the moment and situation that we study within any context or condition.

The analytical results of this initial study concluded that the significant foundation of most communities paid respect to the nature and mutual support. As the study of Sanae Jamrik and Yos Santasombut (2536 :175-178) indicated that the

participatory characteristics of communities preserving their forests were similar. Such communities were such as "the community in plains, upland plains or with a semi-commercial or commercial economy or any ethnic group, the core and shared characteristics of those communities were to conserve the resources vigorously. They were active communities with high ideology and beliefs, and have a complementary relationship for mutual benefit. They have natural resources that can be useful to their communities with leaders or organization leaders, vigorous rules, local wisdom and traditional resource management. Additionally, the communities have established two factors - population and social system for resources' usage". This conclusion challenged and sparked the researcher to investigate and examine the phenomenon varying to empirical situations and alterations.

The staged phenomenon of community forest management may result in a weak description of many scholars logically as that when a community lives with a forest, the way of life and production, and community relationships are holistically related. The community may be controlled over by ideology, cultural rules, and wisdom. Such description may be regarded as a high expectations for practices, but it may be a controversial direction to the fact and non applicable for the current era and existing situations.

When people in the community feel that they do not directly rely on the benefits of community forests, and that the forests may not be the first need for earning their living like those did in the past. It may be a source of supplementary income or basic need relief, but not the significant one.

Eventually, the researcher has a query in her mind about the main related factors on community forest management. The previous analysis indicated that the relationship between production and land conditions was highly and mutually related to the community forests, and also to their beneficial returns in a holistic manner under the control of local wisdom, rules and culture. In the old days, the community depended on forests and resource usage. At the current situation, there have been rare numbers of such studied and expected communities relying on forests with such socio-cultural characteristics and control. Therefore, it might be difficult and reluctant to apply their ideological concepts as previously studied in identifying the current situation of community forest management. This study may need to find some



alternative or new ways of characteristic determination by revising and reexamining the appropriate methodology and process for such purpose.

The researcher feels that there is a need to investigate the body of knowledge based on the facts for recovering the community forests and bringing them back to life with appropriate management system. The systems should be matched with the folkway of communities within the ecological landscape. If scholars in related field still use the same description and management as previously analysed, it might be against the nature of change and evolution. Therefore, the researcher attempts to find out the missing connection point between the theory and practices prior to any attempt is made for the forest community management recovery.

This research aims to discover a new paradigm of the community forest management phenomenon creatively beneficial to community and society. The researcher always pays respect and faith to the scholars' creative effort and work without any refusal to their presentation on the potential and success of community forest management. She does not ever emphasize on any different paradigms and concepts or studies previously conducted by those scholars. This study will be an attempt to reflect the existing body of knowledge in community forest management with much clearer perspective, based upon the postmodern era (Post -modern) concept. This concept is also based on examining the questions of the original body of knowledge of community forest management. Then, any new empirical evident found will be identified descriptively relating to the existing facts of society.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

1. Will there be any missing areas of body of knowledge application in community forest management, if the existing and original bodies of knowledge as expressed by the scholars in related disciplines are examined and verified. Such examination will be related to the real performances of strengthened communities. Will there be any deviation, weakness or gaps existing in such body of knowledge application, and to what extent?

2. Will there be any paradigm and methods ever used to acquire the body of knowledge in community forest management? Those methodological paradigm and concepts have been based on a multidisciplinary application?

### 1.3 Research Objectives

1. To study the development of the Community Forest Management at Namkian sub-district, Phupiang District, Nan Province, Thailand from the previous to present periods.
2. To study and analyze a new paradigm in order to describe the forest community management which is dynamic and highly complex by using community forest located in Nam Kian sub-district, Phupiang district, Nan province as the case study.

### 1.4 Research Methodology

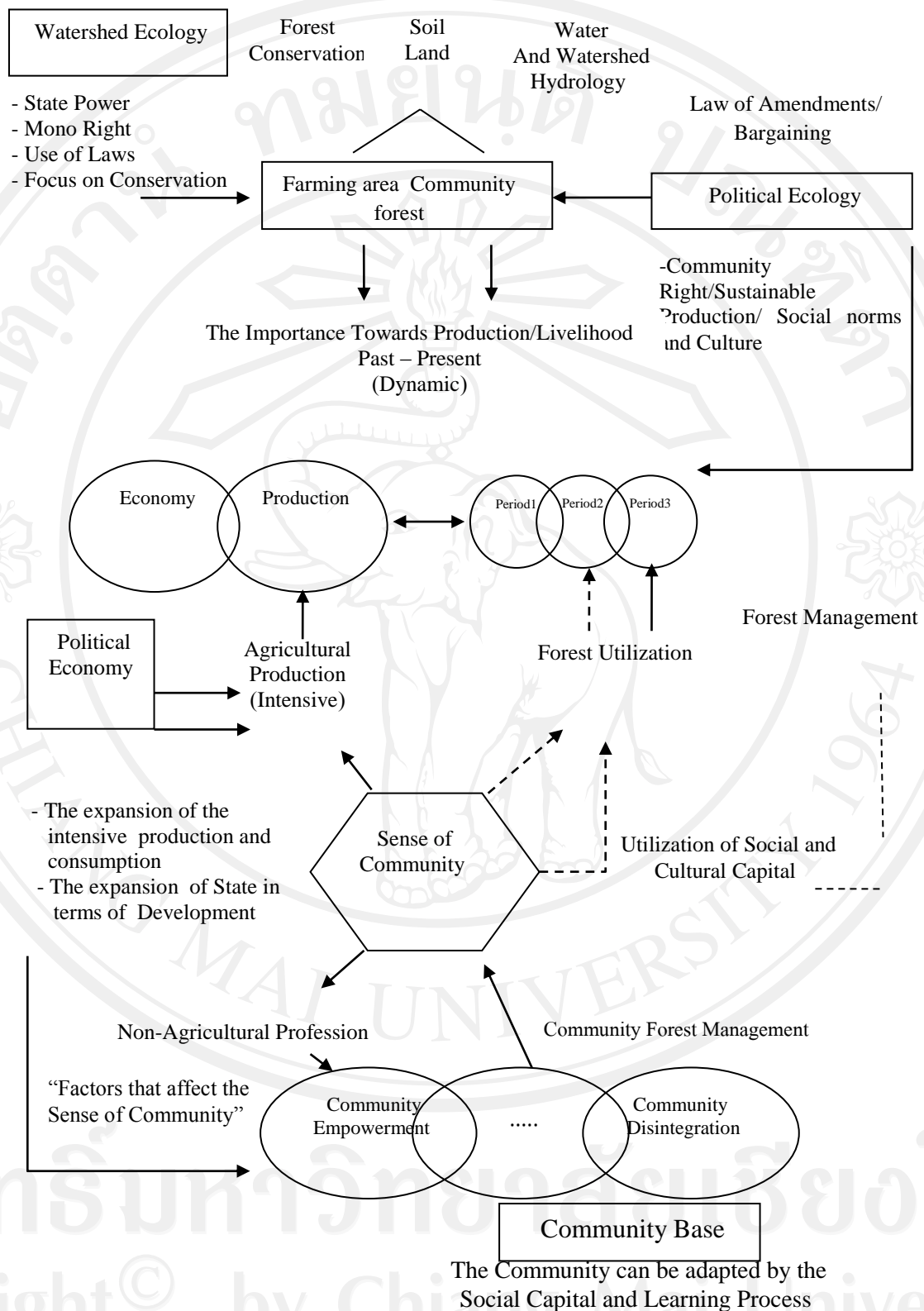
#### 1.4.1 Scope of Research

This study “*Stagnation of Community Forest Management : A case study of Namkian Sub-District, Phupiang District, Nan Province*” aims to study the development of the Community Forest Management from the previous to present periods and to study and to study and analyze a new paradigm in order to describe the forest community management which is dynamic and highly complex by using community forest located in Nam Kian sub-district, Phupiang district, Nan province as the case study.

The phenomenon description of "community forestry" in the past has always used the consistent empiricism paradigm or determinism by deducting phenomenon more or less into smaller parts to understand the watershed ecology, political economy, ecological economy and political ecology with different focuses. However, due to the complexity associated with Community Forest Management regarding natural resources and ecological land use systems, production systems, economic systems of the community and the sense of community, they are highly dynamic and all affect the utilization and management of community forests. To achieve an understanding of Community Forest Management, which is complex and highly dynamic, it needs a new paradigm to understand it holistically. Then the knowledge from multiple disciplines would be applied and would explain that the utilization and management of community forests from the past to the present time has changed because of the first 5 complex factors; forest ecology, land use, production, economy,

and community collective effort. These have been used to create the framework of this study

Therefore in this research, “Problem-orientation” has been used in order to understand the interactions between community activity implementations on forest management that are associated with those complex factors. They have affected the utilization and management of community forests. The researcher has specified the research area in a defined group of small watershed area. The selection of the specific area could be a guideline to see a link between human ecology and physical ecology. At the same time, it would give an analysis of the first implication of a cause. They could be linked together, classified and linked closely to reality, by using the integrated data in research methodology. The characteristic of “Multi-disciplines” could be used to understand and confirm the issues of benefits and resources in specific areas, especially as shown in the figure 1:



**Figure 1.1 Conceptual framework**

#### **1.4.2 Scope of Research**

##### **1) The Scopes**

1.1) To study development of a Community Forest Management in Namkian Sub-District, Phupiang District, Nan province from the previous to present periods.

1.2) To study and analyze the discrepancies/elements of prior knowledge, and test a new paradigm to explain the Community Forest Management in the context of dynamic and highly complex forest communities, using Namkian Sub-District, Phupiang District, Nan Province as the territorial case studies.

The researcher found that the prior knowledge which affected the community forest was defined by scholars. It will be verified by comparison with the real practice of the community which would be recognized as an empowerment on Community Forest Management to find the limitations of the existing description. What are the weaknesses and gaps and in which issues? Are there any dynamics of knowledge? There is a need to understand the body of knowledge in the context of Namkian community in order to see the holistic of Community Forest Management which correlate and link the complex factors that are beneficial to the utilization and management of community forests.

##### **2) Research Area**

2.1) The researcher defined a community as a case study; Namkian Sub-District, Phupiang District, Nan Province which is just a sub watershed where there are no dispossession of resources. There are a variety of ethnic groups, and it is not located in conservative area. Furthermore, it has acknowledged that they have been empowered as a community learning together.

##### **3) Boundaries of Population consist of;**

3.1) The researcher has collected and gathered the data by purposive sampling with key informants such as elderly group, religious leaders, women's groups, youth groups, representatives of various professional groups, including the direct forest user groups. There were 60 households that provided information from answers in interviews.



#### **4) Research Methodology**

4.1) To collect data from various research studies, state agencies, NGOs and scholars throughout the learning exchanges with community-based organizations and NGOs networks working on community forest .

4.2) Document analysis to refine the selection and identification of research studies on issues. For example; the cause of stagnation in Community Forest Management, movements, Community Forest Act of Legislation, restrictions , current situations, arguments, trends and directions, weak points, affects and advantages from the Community Forest Act of Legislation, etc.

4.3) To survey the data from state agencies by interviewing and choosing the empowered communities that meet the criteria and specifications. For instance; Community Development Provincial Office, Provincial Agricultural Office, Provincial Public Health Office, Provincial offices, and (NGOs) Nan Community Network

4.4) Taking the listed names of No.3 to basic analysts and select the community that has the characteristics that consist of the followings;

4.4.1) The overall success of the village is considered to have won the contest at provincial, district, and national levels in terms of development; environment / resources, education, public health, community with substantial success, and statistics of the various external agencies that have come to the site.

4.4.2) The leadership could be from a strong community leader and could be considered either an official leader and/or an unofficial leader who has won awards and given lectures to agencies.

4.4.3) Group/ empowered organization that has been acknowledged as an empowered group. For example; fresh market, co-operative bank, savings group, farmers' group, housewives/youth group, elderly group, etc.

4.4.4) Funding from within / outside the village. Such as, a successful community fundraiser, community fund, savings groups, occupation and income development funds, and commonwealth fund.

4.4.5) Successful social management. For example; Outstanding Village Health Volunteer Foundation, Outstanding Public Health Center, Award-Winning in Anti-Drugs Programs, Outstanding Community Learning Center, continuing public health and education activities, and National Health Security Office (NHSO).

4.4.6) Successful resource and environmental management. For example; efficient environmental activities; resource and environmental field trips, etc.

## **5) Data Collection Tools**

To create a comprehensive data collection for the purpose of education, with these 4 categories:

5.1) Community leader interviews in Namkian sub-district

5.2) Selected group questions

5.3) Head of Household questionnaire in Namkian Village

## **6) Data validation and data analysis**

6.1) Quantitative data analysis associates with the complex factors involved such as, economic data, production, and forest utilization. The researcher has applied statistical information. There is an attempt to understand the complexity and dynamics of the phenomenon of complex factors. As mentioned above, in terms of methodology, information from the data collection is analyzed to find the relationship of the complex factors of the first five factors and how do they affect the latter two factors in each period of time.

6.1.1) Data was analyzed using statistical software to find the frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation, and then synthesized with the descriptive data to find the association within the content.

6.1.2) Criteria for the interpretation of the issues involved. Data was analyzed using statistical computer for frequency, percentage, arithmetic mean and then synthesized with the descriptive data to find the appropriate and related content.

The criteria used to decode the arithmetic mean, is an average of 0.80. It is calculated from the formula which determines the width of the class interval below (Atcharee Chantalakhana, 1999).

$$i = \frac{\max - \min}{\max}$$

i refers to the width of the class interval.

max refers to the maximum score in the class interval.

min ratio defined as the lowest score in the class interval.

The configuration point in a questionnaire has the highest point of 5 points, and the lowest of 1 point, so the width of the interval is calculated by the following;

$$i = \frac{5 - 1}{5} = 0.80$$

The interpretation of mean is as followings;

1.00 to 1.80 means lowest

1.81 to 2.60 means low

2.61 to 3.40 means moderate

3.41 to 4.20 means very satisfied

4.21 to 5.00 means highly satisfied

Lowest	scores	1 point
Low	scores	2 point
Moderate	scores	3 point
Very satisfied	scores	4 point
Highly satisfied	scores	5 point

The average compares to the criteria by calculating the basic statistics of scores as follows.

1) Calculate the percentage by using the formula

The percentage of each item=  $\frac{\text{mean of the item}}{\text{full point}} \times 100$ .

full point

(Full scores in this study refer to 5 according to the measurement system of Likert Scales).

The criteria for determining of the score are as follows:

Score range

More than 84 percent means highly satisfied

More than 68-84 percent means very satisfied

More than 52-68 percent means moderate

More than 36 - 52 percent means low

Less than 36 percent means lowest

In addition, the researcher also analyzed qualitative data of factor complexes and then, by using magnitude from both quantitative and qualitative data of the 7 factors that reflect the changes in different periods of time, found the correlation of changes. How does the change of each factor have magnitude in terms of correlation? It is divided into 3 periods of time in the form of graphs to illustrate the dynamic of each factor. This is to ensure that the utilization and management of community forest have been stagnated and have interacted with other factors that have different description from the theory of political ecology.

7) The study in the area is to get information to cover the two research objectives. The study used mixed methods. Collecting and gathering data from secondary data, maps, and relevant qualitative data and then mixing it with primary data and ecological surveys under the conceptual framework and questions. This was done so one could understand the complexity of the phenomenon and explain the dynamic factors that affect the changes of the relationship between the utilization and management of community forest. The issues are divided into 3 periods of time for consideration; the 1<sup>st</sup> period of settlement, the 2<sup>nd</sup> period of the expansion of community, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> period of the present community.

The researcher has used diversity of methodology through narrative story, interpretation, legends, and events. Also, geographic information, questionnaires, group meetings, interviews, and participation in the community activities. Those methodologies are the conceptual framework with the research questions in order to collect data of the phenomenon and to attempt to communicate and explain the complexity and dynamics of the relationship between the community and the forest.

7 . 1 ) To study overview details, the researcher has studied the secondary information about the community in the study area from previous research studies in order to understand the basic information of the community. The researcher reviewed the studies from various agencies, articles, dissertations and thesis which were conducted at the Namkian community.

7.2) Participatory observation: The researcher has planned to attend and observe the implementation of activities in the community such as the community management plan, forest ordination, village meetings and various events at the sub-district level.

7 . 3 ) To study the spatial developmental data. Using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) with both the boundary map of physical watershed, and changes of land use in different periods of time in order to gather the relationship of land ownership, land use, land characterization, distribution of farming plots of each household as well as the composition of the soil, abundance of minerals, geography, and vegetation.

7.4) Interview: the researcher has used informal interviews and group meetings in order to summarize the link of events during data collection. They can be the story of legends, beliefs, events, and phenomena of the real practices that have occurred in the community in terms of forest ecology, land use, economy system, production system, sense of community, and community forest utilization and management from the past to the present time. Data is derived from interviews of a group of villagers in the studied area. The representatives consist of elders, community leaders, religious leaders, leaders of various professional groups, women's groups, and youth group. They are different in terms of age and experience. They



have exchanged the knowledge of how the lifestyle was at each period of time. What happened and what changes happened in the community?

The data was acquired by various methods. The researcher summarized and analyzed and then conducted a meeting with community leaders to share and exchange information about the findings. We, together, reflected on the views in order to add more information and be more complete.

8) Write a comprehensive study report to answer the two research objectives as indicated.