

Changes in Livelihood of Ethnic Minorities in Central Vietnam and Possible Measures for Future Development

Takagi Yoshiko

Key Words: Development of new livelihood activity, Endogenous development, Ethnic minority, International cooperation, Small-scale year-round beekeeping, Viet Nam

1 . Introduction

From 1986, economic situation of Viet Nam is growing well thanks to “*Doi Moi*”, the economic reform policy, and poverty rate is decreasing. However, ethnic minorities in the remote area still face to difficulty. Most projects and programs the government has implemented focus on “modernization” for catching up Kinh ethnic group, a majority of Vietnam. “Modernization” brings materialized wealth and convenience to many people in not only developed countries but also developing countries. Nevertheless, it is seemingly conceived that only modernization can’t achieve poverty reduction and reduce disparity between the poor and the rich. We need another view for the development. Tsurumi developed the theory called “endogenous development”. Endogenous development doesn’t negate modernization and unit of the development is region. Also, in the theory, life of people should suit to the regional ecosystems where they live and are self-reliant, and they use traditional technologies while referring also to exogenous knowledge, technologies and systems. Then, “Small key-persons makes diverse ways for development”.¹⁾ To propose the possible measures for future development from the viewpoint of the endogenous development theory, this study will describe history of livelihood of ethnic minorities in central Vietnam.

2 . Methods

Interview research was conducted in one ethnic minority village where JICA Grassroots Project by Kyoto University Graduate School of Global Environmental Studies implemented small-scale year-round beekeeping was implemented as new livelihood activity. And also, interview research was conducted in another commune where one small-scale year-round beekeeping farmer lives. He is Kinh ethnic, majority ethnic of Vietnam and was a technical trainer for the project activity.

3 . Results and discussion

Although traditional livelihood of ethnic minorities used to depend on resources of natural forest, it was changed by the Vietnam War and policy change of Vietnamese government called “*Doi Moi*”. Now, near their residential area, man-made forest of rubber and acacia expanded. Their life was influenced by market price of cash crop or trees. But, they still have kept deep relation of family and neighborhood in the villages, with limited relationship with Kinh ethnic. They need other options of livelihood activity that which will not be influenced by market price. The beekeeping could be one option using natural resource in acacia forest. Technique of beekeeping has been improved by the Kinh farmer, who can be recognized as human resource in this region. Although techniques of beekeeping have been transferred to ethnic minorities, they have difficulty to make market of honey. From viewpoint of the endogenous development theory, small-scale year-round beekeeping would contribute to let ethnic minorities self-reliant. For that, outsiders should help make fare honey market and encourage them to improve quality of honey. Experiences of all the steps from production to sales of honey could make key-persons in the village, which is essential for future development.

¹⁾ Tsurumi K (1989). *Naihatsutekihatten no keifu* Tsurumi, Kawata (eds.) *Naihatsuteki hattenron*, p49. Tokyo daigaku Shuppan. p49 in Japanese