CASE STUDY

PEOPLE'S BASED

WATERSHED SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT

IN CHIENG DONG COMMUNE,

YEN CHAU DISTRICT SON LA PROVINCE

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AGRICULTURAL PUBLISHING HOUSE

Hanoi, 1996

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1 GENERAL SITUATION

1.1 Natural conditions
At present time, the Hoa Binh hydraulic-power plant was completed with the capacity of 2.5 billion MW and providing approximately 70% of total power consumption in Vietnam. In 1997 another hydraulic-power plant will be built in Son La with the capacity of about 5.0 billion MW. This meant that the management on the Da river watershed areas is playing an extremely
important role. However there exist some major problems as mention below:

Forest and other resources in Da river watershed are decreasing in both quality and quantity. The forest cover rate was more than 25% in 1960 but now remain more than 9%.

The soil especially forest land are being denuded its fertility due to the soil erosion, land slide and wash-off... In addition to this Vietnam now under the transition to the oriented market economy which has emerged great duties related to the establishment of institutions, and policies as well as practical activities on land use and land management in general and forest land management in specifically.

Lack of water supply (both safe water and water for irrigation purpose) in dry season. The flood and flash-flood happening in the rainy season is now being and going to be serious bottle-necks for those people who are involving the execution of the social economic development strategies and tactics in Da river watershed areas.

Budget deficit and lack of understanding on the improved techniques for production development are considered as serious problems which need to be paid considerable concerns at present time.

The living standards of people in this area in general particularly that of ethnic minorities is now in difficulties which include food and foodstuff shortage for daily consumption, common diseases as malaria, diarrhea, goiter and other social problems like opium addiction. A contrast picture need to be settled is the decreasing of forest areas while the increasing of agriculture farming on the forest land (Mainly semi-fixed hilly areas) and the average food per capita dropped.

There are some programme for watershed management, the integrated economic development programme north west zone of Vietnam and the external cooperation programme such as "Social Forestry on Da river watershed areas" of Germany and project for forest sustainable management of "East and West center of American". That's why in the Da watershed areas, there are some models on natural resources sustainable management which are executing by both state and local people (Chieng Dong commune).

At present time, Vietnam is settling the macro issues simultaneously with its special concerns to the ethnic minorities who are living in the Son La province watershed areas and the efforts for tackling problems facing at different levels (commune, village and household).

The major objective of this is to collect and analyzed the experiences and lessons learnt aiming at the completion of natural resources sustainable people based watershed management in Vietnam (or we say with people's participation). Chieng Dong commune, (Yen Chau, Son La) is now in this historical background.