

**Gender Differentiated Coping Strategies Among Ethnic Vietnamese
Fishers in the Face of a Decrease in Fishing Resources
in Chhnok Tru District, Cambodia**

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October, 19th 2018

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Background

- Tonle Sap is one of the most productive freshwater fisheries that provide an important source of protein and micronutrients critical to the health and employment people (WorldFish, 2013).
- According to Worldfish (2016) the productivity and diversity of Cambodian fisheries have seen a decline in the recent year due to :
 - The fish harvests exceeding sustainable limits
 - The widespread use of illegal and destructive fishing methods
 - The destruction of floodplain habitat essential for fish reproduction
- This decrease effected to the people who live depend on the fishing or fisheries-related activities (trade, fish processing and fish commercial) (WorldFish, 2016).
- The communities living in the Tonle Sap Lake are not only Cambodian but also ethnic Vietnamese, who migrate to Cambodia and some was borne there, and choose fishing and fish culture as their main source of livelihoods.

Background

Vietnamese Living Situation in Cambodia:

- This Vietnamese community is not only found to be vulnerable to the decline in the fisheries resources but also to the poverty, stateless and social discrimination that they lived in and put them as isolated group (MIRO, 2017).
- Most are stateless even they was born in Cambodia. Without citizenship, they are not able to access to the land, unable to moving out of village, employment and the discrimination (The Cambodia Daily, 2014), most families settled into lives on the floating home, Tonle Sap and do fishing (Kirchner, 2015).

Gender relation of Vietnamese

- Family is the most important for Vietnamese and men were known as the head of the family who respond for the income generated, while women were subject to be mainly responsible for household work.
- However, the contributed of the economic status influences on the gender-relations in household and private sphere through the consideration of division of labour, resource access and decision making in household sphere.

This Study

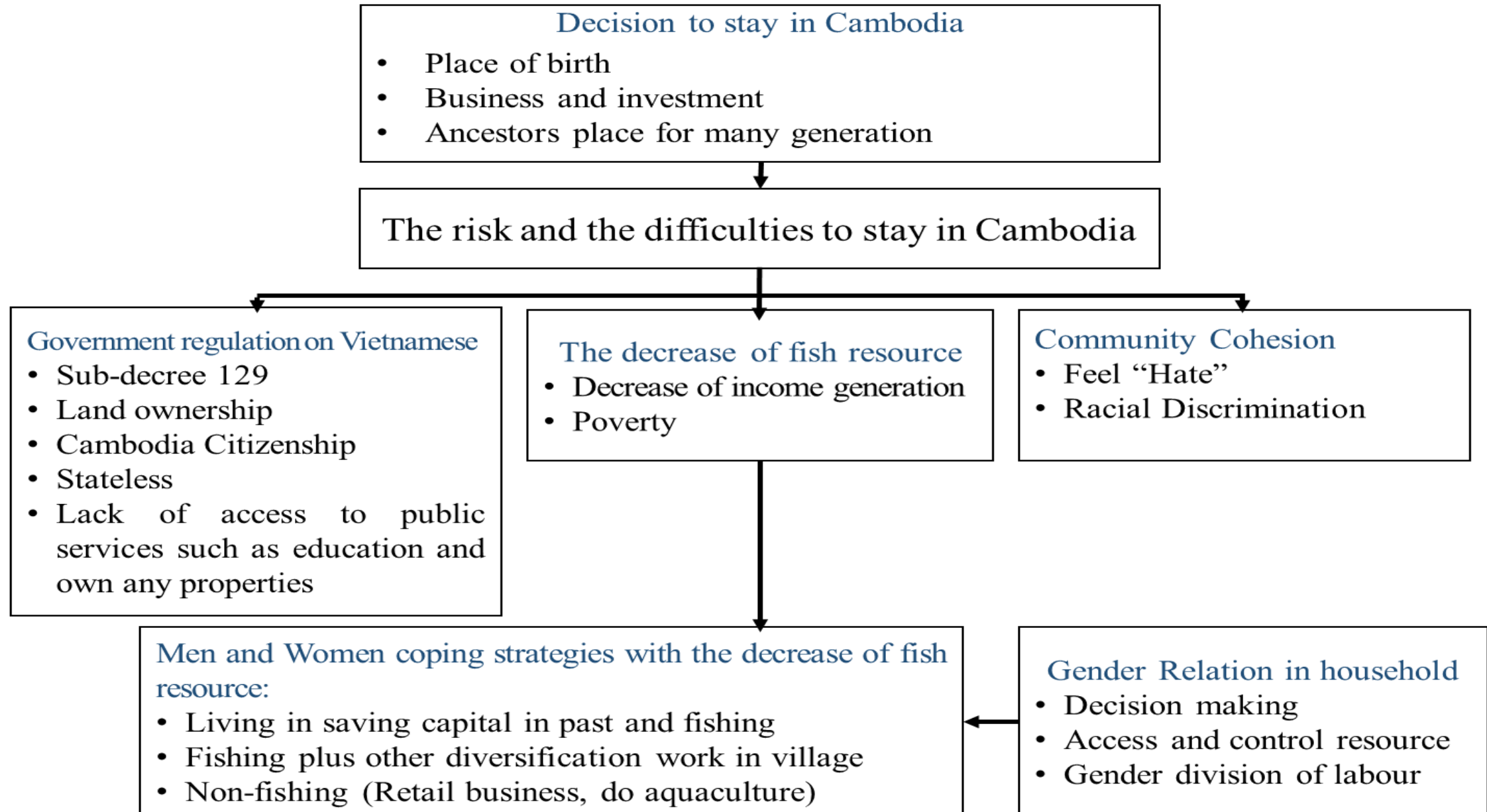


- To describe how the ethnic Vietnamese settle and do fishing in the study area.
- To explore the existing coping strategies of women and men ethnic Vietnamese to deal with the decrease of fish resource.
- To analyse how the gender relations shaped the coping strategies.

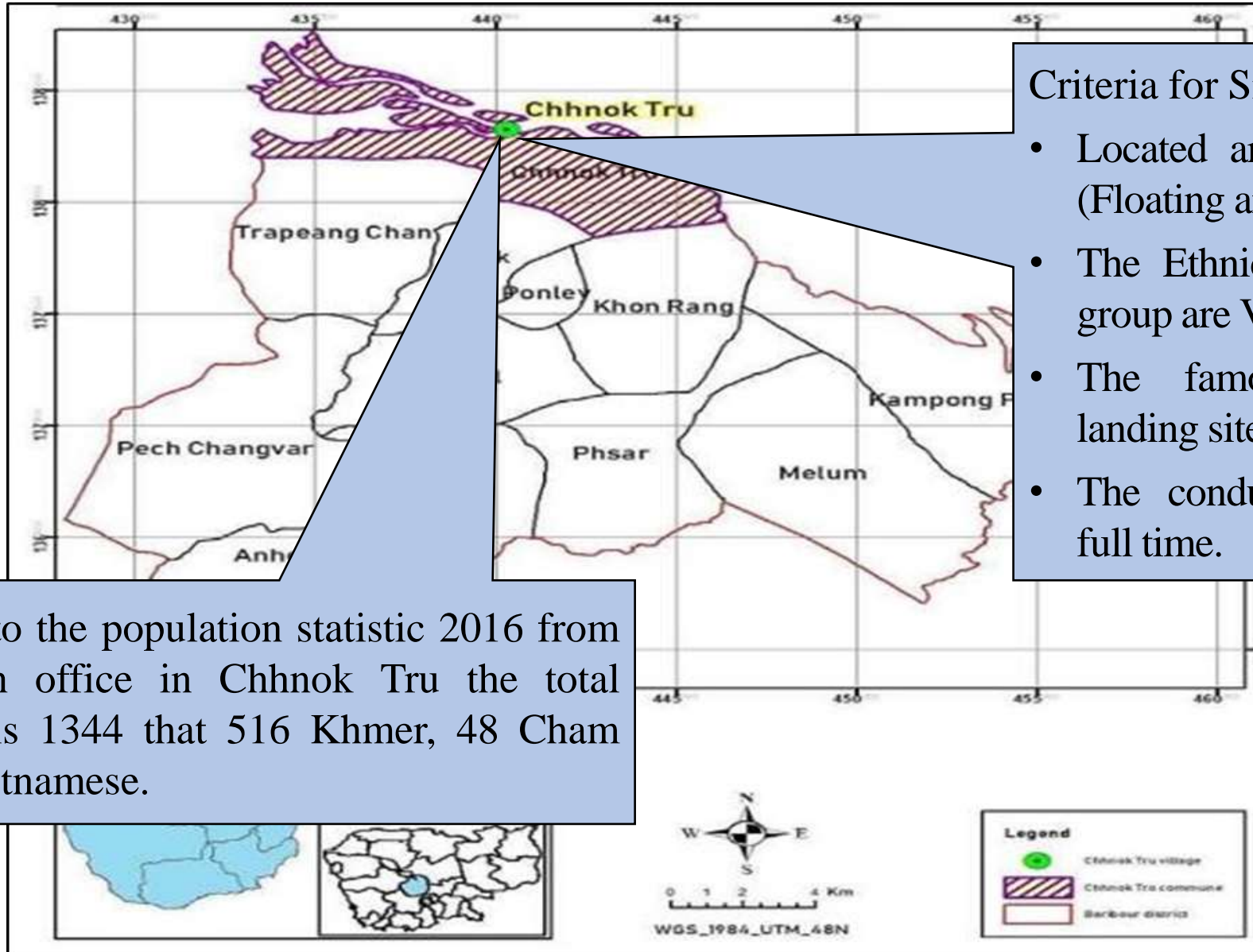


- How do the ethnic Vietnamese settle and do fishing in the study area?
- How do women and men Vietnamese in study area cope with the decrease in fishing resources?
- How do the gender relations shape the coping strategies?

Conceptual Framework



Methodology



Criteria for Site Selection:

- Located around Tonle Sap Lake (Floating area).
- The Ethnic group (The majority group are Vietnamese).
- The famous fishery products landing site.
- The conduct small-scale fishing full time.

According to the population statistic 2016 from Immigration office in Chhnok Tru the total household is 1344 that 516 Khmer, 48 Cham and 780 Vietnamese.

Methodology

Target informant: This study focus on the Vietnamese household who resident in Chhnok Tru floating village, kompong Chhnang, Cambodia.

Method of Data Collection

- A structures of survey questionnaires for in depth-interview
- The key informants
- Focus group discussion
- Observation

Data Analyses:

- The sample of this study was selected by using the connivance sampling
- The qualitative data is collected and transcribed in word, the narrative qualitative method will be used to analyze the lives of individuals as told through their own stories from in-depth interview.

Methodology



Summarize of Samples

Tool of Data Collection	Target informant	Number
In-depth interview	27 Fisher	13 M 14 F
KII	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commune council member• Chief of village• Head of Vietnamese Association• NGOs	1 1 1 1
FGD	Two groups of Fisher	1 MG 1 FG
Observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fish type• Fishing gear• Household conditions	

Results of this study

□ The Socio-Economic of Ethnic Vietnamese

- **Education:** lack of education both Khmer and Vietnamese language. Their child are not able to attend Khmer public school in Village as they lack of citizenship document. However, they are able to attend the Vietnamese private primary school that open by Vietnamese Christine association.
- **Access to Resource and Household Assets:** able to access to all available natural resource same as other group but excepted land ownership. As the location of study area on the water, so the floating house and boat are the priority property among them that mostly hold by men's name.
- **Gender Division of Labor in Household:** men's responsibility are a main income earner in household, they are mostly fisher, while women's responsibility is reproductive works inside the household.

Results of this study

- **Economic status:** Due to lack of opportunity to access and move out for work, most of household depends on the fishing activities which dominated by men. While, other based on the income from retailing small business, labour work and aquaculture in village.
- However, this income generated is not nought for them to save for healthcare and future investment.

Table: The seasonal calendar of income generating activities

Activities	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Fishing	High season			Low season			Close season				High	
Labor work	Low					High					Low	
Retail Business	Vegetable, meat, food and drink seller											
Aquaculture	Can harvest for every 12 months											

The livelihood option among men and women ethnic Vietnamese

- Before the decrease of fishing resource, men were known as fisher who are a main income earner in the family. While women's task is only reproductive work inside the household.
- Their traditional practice, after married the girl have to move to live in husband's home.

Quotes from Ethnic Vietnamese:

"...Household task and child care is women's task. Men's responsibility is fishing. As men is household head and respond for household survival."

"...It is not safe for women go to fish in the lake alone, their responsibility is household work and care work in household sphere."

"...Before the decrease of fishing resource, my wife and my daughter stay at home, while my son and me go to fish in the lake."

The perception of ethnic Vietnamese on fishing resource

- According to the research done by Phanith (2017) show that the amount of household fish catch was decreased in over the years based on the data from the Fisheries Administration Report in 2001 to 2010.
- Likely, the changes of the decrease in fish resource was understood and identified based on their experience and their daily fishing product, they noted that the fish resources have been decreased quickly since 2000.

Quote from fisherman and women in fishing household:

“...Our income are decrease since 2000 because among of fishing product are decrease. I am so sad about this problem as my family mostly depend on this income generating activity.”

“... fishing resources are decline during over 10 years, I am not sure what is the reason of this decrease.”

“...My main income based on fishing. Before 2000, I caught daily around 20 to 40 kg in 1998 and earn a lot of money, especially in Prahok season I can catch until 40 to 60kg. Now, the fishing products started to decrease rapidly and my income is also decreased around 50% from the past.”

The difficulty due to the decrease in fishing resource

- Due to the decrease of fish resources have made a lot of difficulties for ethnic Vietnamese in the floating village, especially the decrease in their incomes which hard affected to their livelihood.

“Due to the money that my husband earned from fishing activities is not enough to cover our living expenses, sometimes I was restored to borrowing from my neighbour or my husband have to borrow from the middleman, in order to make daily expenses for food.”

Vietnamese woman

“Now, the fishing products is less than before around 50% . The income is also less.”

Vietnamese Fisherman

The Coping Strategies to the Decrease in Fishing Resources

- In context of the decrease in fish resource, the ethnic Vietnamese people practice different of coping strategies to increase and maintain their household survival.
- There are 27 household was classified into 3 groups based on their current livelihood activities that they have taken to cope with the decrease in fish resources.

Livelihood Setting	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Number of HH In-depth interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7
Livelihood assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Boat• Net	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Boat• Net• Aquaculture cage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Boat• Aquaculture cage
Livelihood activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fishing• Cutting fish head• Labor work• Small retail business• Aquaculture activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cutting fish head• Labor work• Small retail business• Aquaculture activity



Task sharing by men and women in household

The coping strategies of different household groups, the responsibilities of men and women are different due to their coping strategies and household livelihood assets as well.

Activities	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
A face of a decrease in fish resource			
Fishing	MMF	MMF	×
Mend the fishing gears	FFM	FFM	×
Household task	FFM	FFM	MMF
Care work	FFM	FFM	FFM
Aquaculture	×	MFF	MMF
Cutting fish head	×	FFF	FFF
Hired labor work	×	MMF	MMM
Small retail business	×	FFF	FFM



Gender relation in household in Group 1

Men

- A head of the family
- A main income generated persons.
- All the productive work are dominated by men
- Dominated on the decision making, cash and productive work in household
- Afraid to loss their masculinity, so decide to continue their fishing because they are not able to access other diversifies works

"... I decided to continue fish as I did not know what can I beside the fishing"

"...The fishing resource are less now, and I have moved to fish far to the lake to maintain my fish catch and ensure the income to support the household demands. It is what all the fishermen can do to maintain their household income. "

"... As I am ahead of household and the main income actor if I still can maintain this household income, I won't let my wife work outside the household because no one can replace her task and take care the children."



Gender relation in household in Group 1

Women

- Were not notice as fisher or income earner.
- Their economic status is depended on their husband's income generating.
- Followed their husbands' chores.
- Less of opportunity to access income earning activities and limited their mobility.
- Less of voice in their household decision making
- Not able to diversify income source.
- More dominated by men counterpart.

"... I need to take care the child and do the household work"

"... women are better to take care their child properly."

"...women is not able to fishing alone...and my husband won't allow me to work outside the house."

"...My husband is ahead of the family; he has the power to make all the decision in the household. In term of the decrease in fish resources, my husband decided to continues fishing activities. I used to ask him to find other work in the village, but he does not agree. He did not listen to me "



Gender relation in household in Group 2

Men

- A head of the family
- A main income generated persons.
- Dominated on the decision making, cash and productive work in household
- Afraid to loss their masculinity, so decide to continue their fishing because they are not able to access other diversifies works

"... I decided to continue fish as it is main income generated activity, while my wife decide to move around to sell the vegetable. I feel I am not good enough that I am not able to ensure the income in household."

"...the difficulty of income in household, my wife she go to cut the fish head to earn some money. However, I really don't want her to do it because no one look after child at home."

"... I worry about my sister, she have to go fare away the house to sell some food, but it is no choice because the demand of income in family and we don't have enough men labor in household."



Gender relation in household in Group 2

Women

- Constrained by the household reproductive task and gain more workload.
- Due to income problem in household and other women in the family have responded to the household task and care work, pushed some of them to engage with the diversified income source as men too.
- These activities led them can negotiate with their man counterpart on the income generating and their mobility in the village

"... it is not easy for women to do both household work and go out for income work. I feel tired but I happy that can earned some money to help my husband"

"... My money just a small part of income if compare to my husband. However, now I able to move around the village for work since my mother inlaw help to take care my two daughter. "

"...I have no choice. Since my husband earned less than before, I need to go out for work."

"...In my family, my brother and my father go fishing, while my mother's responsibility on household task. For me, the difficulties of income in the household, I need to engage in income-generating activities as my brother and my father too. However, sometimes I help my mother when she is not feel good."



Gender relation in household in Group 3

Men

- A head of the family
- No longer able to take use their masculinity
- Share the decision making power, cash management and productive work in household with women.
- Share the reproductive work with women in household

"... I feel I lost my masculinity since I am not able to generate enough income for my family. Sometime, I feel pressure that I need to redefend on my wife's income."

"... In sense of community men should the person who respond the income generated but while the economic difficult take place, all person in family need to have a responsibility."

"...Both of us try to generate the income to ensure our family survival. I don't think it is difficult that just men share the household task and child care from their wife as now she is also busy with income generated."



Gender relation in household in Group 3

Women

- A head of family
- Became a main income earner in household
- Engage with the diversified income source
- Able to negotiate with their man counterpart on the income generated activities and their mobility in the village.
- Ask men to share their household task and child care.

"... I am able to move around the village and I am happy for my own income generation even I feel a bit tired because of household task."

"...Since my husband dropped the fishing, we decide to retail a small business as noodle seller. The income is not much higher than fishing but it is easy and able to maintain our daily expend in household "

"...The economic difficulty push me to go out for work but I feel better that I because an income earner for my family. Now I can decided and mange on the money I earned."

"...my husband help me to take care the child and do some aquaculture at home, while I go out to sell the grocery stuff by boat in the village. Sometime, he don't mind to cook for us."

Conclusion

- Due to lack of right to access mainland and moving for migrant, ethnic Vietnamese tend to settle in their commune and their livelihood-based fishing activities.
- During the decrease in fish resource, the ethnic Vietnamese **practice different of coping strategies** which are mostly depended on their **knowledge and experiences that practiced in the past** to increase and maintain their incomes, including the existing livelihood option and the new income generating activities.
- The women in Group 1 are less of opportunities to move out and involve in income generated since there are mostly depend on their husband only. Compare to group 2 and 3, they are more free of income generating activities involvements. Their self-confident and capacity make them are able to catch up a better coping strategies to the face a decrease in fishing resource.
- A present of women in household income generation activities allowed them become more confident to talk and move around the village, and are able to maintain their family survival.
- The gender relations in the household is main drive of their coping strategies in term of the decrease in fish resources. It shaped their coping strategies due to the power of women and men on the decision making, accessibilities to household assets and the gender division of labor in the household.

Recommendation

Empower the women ethnic Vietnamese to make a better coping strategies:

- Built their confident to engage with the new diversify income source in the village in term of the decrease in the fish resource.
- Provide some training for additional skill on the small business management and other vocational training courses to the ethnic Vietnamese in the village.
- The women participating in each training should be identified.
- As training, research and action planning of any organization and the authority take place, these programs should be planned a comfortable schedule for women to join.

Future Study Recommendation

- Should focus on how the coping strategies of each group make their livelihood sustainable in the next few years.
- Due to dub-decree, 129 just released in late of 2017, so the future study would be more interesting to research in this study area in next following years to see how existing livelihood setting was changed in term of the permanent resident card for alien take place.

Thank You
for
Your Attention!

