

# **The Pattern of Decentralization Regarding to Plantation Forests and Its Effects in Myanmar**

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## **Introduction**

Decentralization of forest management which is the relocation of administrative function from the central authority can be said to have started in Myanmar in the 1850s, when Dr. Dietrich Brandis hit upon an idea of teak regeneration with the assistance of Taungya Practice.

According to R.J. Fisher's (1999) differentiation, the function or power shifted from a central bureaucracy to regional or local offices of the bureaucracy can also be termed as decentralization. In the case of plantation forest establishment in Myanmar, the Central Authority or the Ministry of Forestry transfers responsibility to Township Forest Departments (TFDs) and the TFDs seek the participation of communities by giving responsibilities and some benefits but little or no authority. The first one is the decentralization approach with some degree of devolution and the second is pure decentralization.

## **Research Methods**

The research was based on the exploratory social survey method. 120 households were selected using judgment sampling. Questions were designed to explore the decentralization pattern and the socio-economic situations of the participants. Face-to-face interviews were conducted using structured questions. All the family members were welcome at interviews, which were conducted in the form of conversations.

The TwoStep Cluster analysis procedure, the approach parallels that of Pender (2002) and Jansen et al. (2006), was applied as an exploratory tool to socio-economic data of the families of plantation villages.

## **Results and Discussion**

The results of TwoStep Cluster Analysis reveal that

- Permanent plantation villagers have the best prospects of a promising living standard at the initial stage
- They are the most promising ones to become the forest protective groups
- Unfortunately, they turned into destructive groups as the incentives for permanent villagers are temporary with no long-term sustainable socio-economic consideration.

Findings of the research which applied TwoStep Cluster Analysis reveal that the decentralization pattern of TFDs have no long term sustainable effect on the rural people. It also points out the need of land for rural people to establish agro-forestry based community forests so as to guarantee sustainable socio-economic situation.

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