

## **Food Security of Slash and Burn Farming Systems in Northern, Lao PDR: Case Study in Nam Chat Village, Phou Kout District of Xieng Khuang Province**

**Author** Sonemany Pathumphone  
**Country** Lao PDR  
**University** Khon Kaen University  
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### **Abstract**

Slash-and-burn farming is an important food production system widely practiced in northern Lao PDR. However, relative little attention and efforts have been directed towards the food security of slash-and-burn farming systems of the various ethnic groups.

The objectives of the research were to evaluate food sources and security, as well as household income of three ethnic groups at Nam Chat village, Xieng Khaoung province in northern Lao PDR, where the village included three (3) ethnic groups; Khmu, Hmong, and Lao Loum. The qualitative research was carried out using secondary data and primary data which included formal key informant group discussion and household semi-structured interview. The result found that the two sources of three ethnic groups obtained from domestic food (crops and livestock), and wild foods (wild plants and wildlife).

The three ethnic groups consumed different quantities of food sources from crops or animals species, depending on specific ethnic groups. The study also found that rice was the main staple food crop for three ethnic groups. However, Hmong and Khmu representing approximately 30% of total household in this village produced insufficient rice for household consumption. Irrespective of economic return the three ethnic groups earned household income both from crops and domestic animals, as well as from non-timber forest products and wildlife, Lao Loum received per capital income greater than Hmong and Kmu in the present study.