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Do the livelihood strategies affect encroachment in a state-owned reserved forest in Myanmar?

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Livelihood strategy is characterized by the combinations of activities selected by the individual households to achieve their self-defined livelihood outcomes.

Household's choice of activities (farm or non-farm) depends on the available livelihood capitals (human, social, natural, physical and financial), the vulnerability context, the rules and policy, and the chosen activities have impacts on the surrounding environment. Land is the ultimate resource in the rural livelihood development. Land use transitions reveal the interaction between the human activities and the surrounding environment. My study aims to investigate the relation between livelihood strategies, and the land use change in the state-owned reserved forest, which is called encroachment. Encroachment is the intrusion of other land use into the forest areas, such as agricultural expansion which is a major driver of deforestation. When the rules and regulations of state-owned forest becomes limitations to the livelihood of the local communities living in the vicinity of the forest, the understanding of local people's adaptation strategy to maintain their livelihood matters in the process of policy implementation and the rural development. In this study addresses three questions; (1) whether the current land reform policy can control the encroachment, (2) can livelihood diversification lessen the encroachment, and (3) how different livelihood strategies affect encroachment. The results revealed that the current policy and the livelihood diversification cannot reduce encroachment, and encroachment rate differed relative to the livelihood strategies even among the farm-oriented livelihood. The findings from this study were expected to contribute the implementation of forest land reform policy and the livelihood development of the forest people.