

Research Proposal

joint research on Rural Development in Vietnam

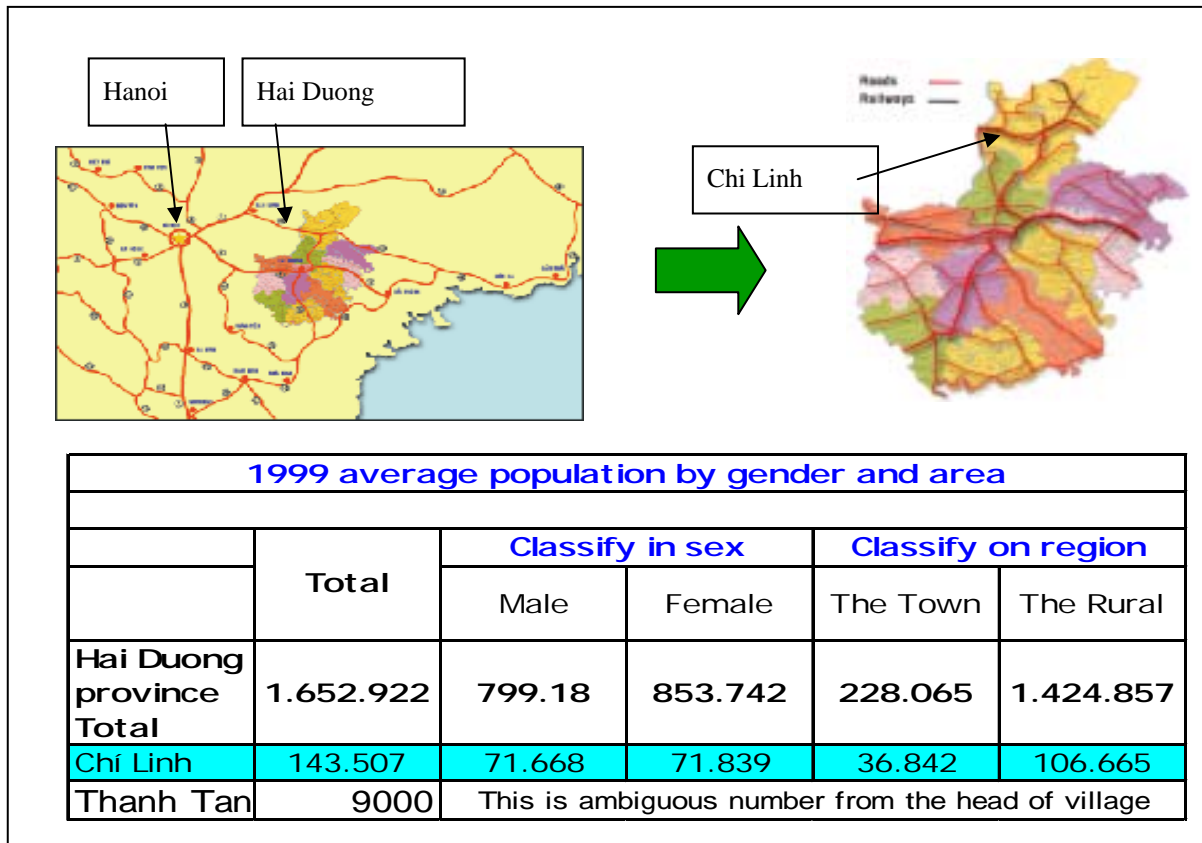
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Around 70% of the population in Vietnam is in rural area. Asian Development Youth Forum conducted a field survey in Thanh Tan village Hai Duong province to grasp a brief picture of the rural villages. I went to a rural village near Hanoi last March with 3 students from Hanoi University of Foreign Studies and 2 members of ADYF-Japan. The main resource of income for the village was Lychee.

It is very famous and popular fruit among young people in Tokyo. Today I have brought lots of drinks and snacks.. These are product made from processed lychee.

When you go to supermarket, you will see lots of product using processed lychee.

Just like other many ordinary villages in the rural area, Thanh Tan is struggling with low income. Their capacity of profit making is restricted. They lack of agricultural technology, information, know-how in sales activity. Since several hundred years ago, people have been producing lychee in these areas. However, too many farmers started to raise and sell lychee to Hanoi and Southern China recently, so that the over supply causes decrease of market price. That is the basic reason why villagers cannot make enough profit from lychee so far.

We corrected many facts which we can break through these obstacles. We proposed two strategies to the farmers and the president of the village.

Strategy 1 is what you can call "New Market Strategy." This is the strategy to increase the profit by marketing to other cities other than Hanoi or Southern China. The problem is that the farmers sell their lychee only to Hanoi and Southern China. We learned that the market prices are various city to city even within Vietnam. The price by kilo in Hue, a city in middle Vietnam, is 5 times higher than that of Hanoi. Northern Vietnam has environmental advantage in Lychee production. Fresh Lychee Price in Tokyo is amazing 15times higher because you cannot raise any lychee in Japan. Almost all the lychee is imported from China and Thailand.

The second strategy we together see next is "processing Strategy." In the village, farmers sell only fresh lychee (raw lychee) and primitively processed, dried lychee. Fresh and dried, these two are the only variety of their product. Unfortunately, lychee's harvest season is very short term in early summer. If farmers do not processing the lychee, these farmers of course do not have agricultural technology, all the lychee will sold to a small market at once. This will surely be oversupply and cause very low market price in Hanoi. If they start processing these lychee, they can sell them at high price because it is out of the season, and added value give them much more profit than primitive lychee sales.

Huge amount of processed lychee is imported into Japan. They can start from rather primitive processing like juice, jelly, or candies. To expand their capacity in processing lychee, they have to lure of investment for lychee processing factories. If they will be successful to be the processing center, they will make a big profit. This is our processing strategy.

Can they achieve or implement these strategies? We have to check the feasibility under its situation and get some implication from our survey.

If farmers do farming individually, these two strategies can never be realized. It is important that farmers and peasants have to be organized efficiently, share all the

resource.

We actually explained these strategies to villagers and correct opinions from people in the village. What we did discover (or I can say “ didn’t discover”) through interviews is that they have no effective “production cooperative.” Farmers are not organized enough to share resources to make more profit efficiently. What about agricultural club? Agricultural club in the village we interviewed is a small, weak organization because it collects only 500VND per month from each household. Farmers think only about his or her own income. They do not look working in cooperation with other peasants in the village. Even Van Phuong, the Vietnamese student who joined this research said “I m very surprised that there are no production network in this village. I have never known this situation.”

In conclusion, the first step the village has to take is to organize and reinforce “production cooperative.” They share the knowledge and resources to realize these strategies to increase their income. They have the potential agri product “lychee.” If they keep raising and selling lychee individually or isolately like now, lychee will not give less and less income to the farmers. They need production cooperative to develop their village.

Future Research Proposal

1) Learn the field survey method 2) Reinvestigate the village to see how the distribution and marketing are working.3) Interview with agricultural product distributor 4) Learn more about current situation of rural villages

The research can be conducted by a group of Japanese students from various universities and Hanoi students separately in different perspectives, and then it will be discussed through video conference or hopefully by our trip to Vietnam. By doing so, we can build up fruitful joint research incorporating both views and some major analytical methods.

Time schedule

June to July : Basic studies, specifying the location

July: Video Conference, discussion on Hanoi and HCMC in tourism perspective

Summer: Field Research all across Vietnam

September : Video Conference for research mid-term report

Spring 2006: have a report event (final target)

all comments and suggestions are welcome at info@adyf.org