

Influence of the Difference between Legal and Local Concepts of Land Ownership on Forest Management

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In many countries, Forest Law is expected to control the uses of forests. To fulfill the objects of the law, it is important that the people understand the legal concepts. The aim of this paper is to discuss the influence on the forests if there was a difference between local and legal concepts on land ownership, through analyzing the people's behavior on forests in the Union of Myanmar. She established her forest law in the 19th century, but is recently losing her forests rapidly. The Constitution declares that all land is state owned, and forests are managed by the Forest Department. According to the Forest Law, cultivation in Reserved Forest is prohibited. The people did not identify the regulations, and the local customs were still followed, in which they admit the first person to 'own' the piece of land, and resulted in deforestation. The reasons why local concepts remained might be because some exceptions were made in the law, the numbers of people and capital to manage the forests are not enough, and, the law was applied case by case. To make the law more effective, efforts to understand the law as well as to know the people's behavior, and to amend the law to meet various interests regarding the forests, might be required.