

Knowledge of ethnic minorities in the central highlands region of Vietnam – viewed from development resources

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Abstract: Over the last few decades, when researching ethnic minority communities, researchers have increasingly focused on the local knowledge assets that the community has amassed through productive labour and life organisation. The Central Highlands is a multi-ethnic area that still retains various and distinct sources of traditional knowledge, which play a crucial role in the community's long-term development. Based on the materials gathered, the paper primarily examines the function of indigenous knowledge as a development resource in the Central Highlands region.

Keywords: ethnic minorities; development resources, Central Highlands, local knowledge, culture.

1. Introduction

The Central Highlands are Vietnam's highlands, consisting of five provinces: Kon Tum, Gia Lai, Dak Lak, Dak Nong, and Lam Dong. They cover 54,474 km² and account for 16.8% of the country's natural area. The Central Highlands have a population of almost 6 million people, with 54 ethnic groups living together (there are 12 local ethnic minorities), with ethnic minorities accounting for around 2.2 million people [1]. Currently, the Central Highlands protects various physical and intangible cultural heritages, both historical and cultural in nature. It also contains distinct aesthetic characteristics, such as community buildings, long houses, stone instruments, tomb sculptures, festivals, and folk literature riches, including epic ballads, ancient stories, fables, rhymes, and folk songs rich in identity passed down through many generations. The Central Highlands ethnic minorities, in addition to being devoted to their land, are constantly adapting to their living environment. These include experiences with environmental protection, holy forests, watershed forests, production, farming, medical treatment, and a nature-friendly lifestyle. This source of local knowledge is critical and has several benefits for the long-term evolution of nature and humanity. As a result, understanding how to appropriately evaluate and use the function of ethnic minorities' local knowledge in the Central Highlands in terms of development resources would help to preserve and promote such intellectual values in the present.

2. Study overview

Discussing local knowledge of ethnic minorities in Vietnam in general and ethnic minorities in the Central Highlands region in particular has so far received a lot of attention from researchers. Typical projects include the following: Research on the community forest management model of the Nung people in Phuc Sen commune, Ha Quang, Cao Bang [2]; Indigenous knowledge of highland people in agriculture and natural resource management [3]; Local knowledge and sustainable development [4]; Xtieng customary law and forest land issues in Binh Phuoc today [5]; Folk knowledge of Thai people in using and protecting resources [6]; Learn about the customary laws of ethnic groups in Vietnam [7]; Local knowledge on natural resource management of ethnic groups in the Northern mountainous

provinces [8]; Ethnic culture in the Central Highlands - viewed from the aspect of indigenous knowledge [9]; Customary laws of ethnic minorities in the Central Highlands in sustainable development [10]; Indigenous knowledge of ethnic minorities in the Southeast in the process of Vietnamese social development [11],... Studies have clearly shown: In the process of development, Ethnic minorities have accumulated a lot of knowledge. This knowledge treasure not only contributes to the general development of the community but at the same time enriches the cultures of ethnic groups in specific natural conditions and social environments.

3. Research Methods

The article mainly uses two methods: the method of inheriting secondary documents and the method of synthesis and analysis.

4. Research results

4.1. The role of local knowledge in social management

Local knowledge, in both scientific and practical terms, can be considered an asset of an ethnic group in the process of development, reflects the relationship of each community to the natural and social environment in which that ethnic group exists. As a cultural element of an ethnic group, local knowledge of ethnic groups is also very diverse. Each ethnic group in the specific conditions of the natural and social environment has its own treasure of knowledge [12].

Table 1: Compare the differences between indigenous knowledge and scientific knowledge

Fields of knowledge	indigenous knowledge	scientific knowledge
1. Scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The sacred and the secular go together; including the supernatural. - Full integration, based on the system. - Preserved through word of mouth and in cultural practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Only consider the secular world; Supernatural exclusion. - Analysis or reduction, based on memory sets of the whole. - Stored through books and computers.
2. Level of truth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Considered as the truth. - Subjective. - Truth is seen in nature and in faith. - Explain based on examples, experience and proverbs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Considered the closest approach to the truth. - Truth is found from human interpretation. - Explanation based on hypotheses, theories and laws.
3. Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Long-lasting wisdom. - Real life and existence. - Has good local forecasting ability (with ecological value). - Weaker in conditions in remote areas and other localities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Short-term speculation. - Abstract; undergo inspection. - Has good forecasting ability in natural conditions (has rational value). - Weak in using local knowledge.

Source: [13]

The Central Highlands region is home to many ethnic minorities such as: Ba Na, Co Ho, Xo Dang, Mnong, Ma, Gie - Trieng, Hre, Rham, Brau, Xtieng, Gia Rai, Ede, Chu Ru and Raglai,... and some ethnic minorities in the northern mountainous provinces migrated after

1975.

The peoples here, in the process of conquering this land, created for themselves a culture with their own imprint, including local knowledge to adapt to the ecological environment, on the other hand, receiving exogenous cultural elements to enrich traditional culture. Villages of ethnic minorities are traditional social organizations, and in many cases, the only form. The names may be different, but it is a gathering place, a place of residence for residents, and the relationships between them are also very different. However, in the early stages, the village is often a gathering place for people who are related by blood. Gradually, there are other people who are not related by blood, and new relationships appear - neighbor relationships. As a rule, villages have common ownership of residential land, agricultural land, forests, grazing lands, rivers and streams, etc. where every member of the village has the right to use it and at the same time has the obligation to protect it. The village is the residence of many families related by blood or neighborly, becoming a basic social organization, based on community relations, self-governing, operating on the principles of customary law. In another aspect, the village also shows its community culture through the common house, called the community house. This is where community activities take place and where ceremonies are held. When the State has not directly intervened in each village, when the law has not yet institutionalized village activities, The village has a self-governing apparatus, using customary law as the basic principle to handle violations and manage the community. Villages of ethnic minorities in the Central Highlands are formed and operated according to their own standards, so they have a solid social structure. It is a place that accumulates and produces many unique cultural values like an "oasis" separate from other residential communities, and interaction with other areas is also very limited. That living space is local knowledge formed and experienced, transmitted from generation to generation. The role of local knowledge clearly demonstrates certain values in social control and management, when ethnic society is not yet subject to State management intervention. To operate society in traditional villages, when there is no State legal system, the community has built its own principles, also known as customary laws. Most ethnic minorities do not have writing, so all knowledge accumulated in life is passed down orally from one generation to the next, with some elements becoming the customary law of the community. Customary law is an unwritten code that regulates the behavior of community members with each other and people's behavior with nature. As a product of the community, the customary laws of ethnic groups, whether matriarchal or patrilineal, aim to create friendly relationships between people and between people and nature. Customary laws of ethnic minorities in the Central Highlands region refer to aspects of ethnic life, including regulations on community organization and management. To a certain extent, customary law is an aspect of local knowledge that ethnic groups accumulate in the process of production and social stability for development, so it represents locality (attached to each ethnic group), there is no common customary law for all communities. Thus, in any ethnic group, customary laws bear the imprint of ethnic culture and serve as a principle in social management and administration.

4.2. The role of local knowledge in economic life

The local knowledge of ethnic minorities in the Central Highlands is like a treasure trove of experience, which successive generations accumulate and transmit. It is formed during the productive labor process associated with practical activities and specific environmental conditions. This knowledge will not exist if it is not associated with practical

activities and in a specific cultural space. It is practical activities and in specific environments, through the experiences of ethnic groups, whether successful or unsuccessful in farming, hunting, gathering, in health care, etc. helped them ask questions and find their own answers from practical activities. Since then, people have accumulated experiences and passed them from generation to generation. The role of local knowledge in economic life is expressed specifically as follows:

Firstly, with the issue of ownership in villages and hamlets. In traditional society, merchant society, and villages in the Central Highlands, there exist two main forms of ownership: collective ownership and individual ownership. Collective ownership was established to include all things of common nature that the entire trading community and village benefit from, in all fields and all aspects such as forests, mountains, land, rivers, streams, water sources,... That is the ownership of territory between hamlets and villages. The collective owner is the community of people living together within the hamlet or village. There, the Village Elder, the Village Head, and highly reputable people are the management representatives in all aspects. For individual ownership within a village or hamlet, members have the right to freely exploit, cultivate and use resources such as land, water, forests, etc. to serve production needs. as well as in daily life activities. In case someone wants to invade or exploit land and other resources owned by a village or individual must be approved by the village and individual owner, otherwise it will be considered a violation of the customary law of the village or will have to be fined and forced to compensate for the violation. When a dispute over land ownership arises, the parties will resolve it themselves. If it cannot be resolved, the Village Elder, Village Head, or reputable person will mediate. In this case, each side is fined chickens, pigs or cattle and wine to the village depending on the severity of the violation.

Second, in exploiting products from forests and fields. Forest land and fields play an important role that cannot be replaced. Previously, forests covered almost the entire Central Highlands, from high mountains to valleys and lower in flat areas. According to the beliefs of ethnic minorities in the Central Highlands, the fields give them food all year round, so no matter what environment they live in, people here choose to live near the forests and cultivate the fields by clearing, burning, and burning. poke, tease. Accordingly, on a newly developed field, people grow rice, corn, cassava, beans, etc. until the land becomes infertile, then abandon it to find a new field. This cycle only repeats itself when the previously exploited fields recover the necessary openness. In the undeveloped market conditions and commodity exchange activities in many places, the production of the Central Highlands people mainly focuses on the goal of self-sufficiency for daily life, while the exploitation of valuable products available in nature still exists quite clearly in people's lives. The Central Highlands ethnic groups also clearly distinguish between cultivated and non-cultivated land types and have quite strict and specific regulations on land division and use. This distinction varies more or less between ethnic groups, but in general, it can be divided into three types: i) Residential land: this is the land people use to build houses, barns, granaries, and public works. Residential areas are often placed under the management of hamlets, villages, and hamlets. And depending on the farming cycle and major changes in village life, new residential areas can form. ii) Cultivated land: including upland fields, wet fields, and orchards. This is also the common property of the village, divided among members, families, and clans for exploitation and production. iii) Forbidden land: these are sacred forests, forbidden forests, forests used as cemeteries, etc., usually sacred forests (Yang pri) located at the top of mountain peaks. In the opinion of the people, it is the residence of the gods, and

people who violate it will be punished. Forests used as cemeteries are usually located in the northwest of the village, where they are used to bury the village's dead and conduct traditional rituals such as grave-leaving ceremonies [14]. In the Central Highlands, there are many wild animals, such as wild boars, wild chickens, deer, elephants, monitor lizards, and birds. This is the food source that nature provides for residential communities. Depending on the characteristics of the animal, the Ba Na, Co Ho, Xo Dang, Gia Rai, E De, Chu Ru, etc. people can summarise their fishing experiences. People rely on these "preferences" of animals to hunt effectively. Each animal in the forest often leaves characteristic traces when moving, making it easy for experienced people to recognize. Hunters will follow these tracks to find animals; as with weasels, the tracks left behind are waste (faeces). Weasels eat fruit, but these seeds are difficult to digest, so they often leave faeces along the way. Leaving waste on the way is no different from guiding a hunter. With his experience, the hunter followed those directions to find the weasel's habitat. Ethnic groups such as the Mnong, Cho Ro, Ma, etc. also rely on the above-recognisable characteristics to find animals when hunting. The places they pay the most attention to encountering animals are grasslands, rivers, streams, ponds, lakes, etc. Because these are the places where animals often come out to eat and drink water. To be able to hunt animals, ethnic groups in the Central Highlands have crafted tools such as crossbows and traps. These types of tools are also very diverse. When hunting or shooting like this, people are always aware of the limits of the area where they can hunt and do not violate the forest land of other villages or ethnic groups. Honey exploitation in forests is also of interest to ethnic minorities in the Central Highlands. This is a valuable product that is not only used in eating and improving health but also to treat common diseases such as coughs, sore throats, and digestive diseases that the forest brings to the community. copper. The experience of residents living closely with the forest is that bees often nest in cool places near rivers, streams, and many flowering trees. When searching for honey, each ethnic group has its own rituals to seek the help of the gods to make their honey exploitation more effective. For example, in the Cho Ro people, before going in search of honey, the eldest person will stand in front of the ancestral altar and pray, praying for a lot of honey collection and not encountering any problems during the extraction process. Because the Cho Ro believe that if you do not pray, your ancestors will not bless you, not only will you not get the honey product you want, but you will often encounter bad luck. other. Other ethnic groups, such as the Mnong and Xtieng, also perform prayer rituals when exploiting honey in the forest.

Third, exploit and use water resources. Although living in the Central Highlands cultural space, each ethnic group has a different approach to water resources as well as their use in production and daily life. The Cho Ro people divide natural water sources into three types: water from streams, rainwater, and underground water. In the latter, the spring water is governed by a deity named "Ba Suoi." The reason for this concept may be because streams often rise in water during the rainy season, causing damage to people and property. Therefore, in the face of that destructive force, people worshipped him as a god. The Mnong people divide water sources into: river water, spring water, rain water, underground water (well water), and water from plants. According to the beliefs of the Mnong people, river water and spring water are governed by gods. Humans are only allowed to use and not pollute rivers and streams, such as by dropping dead bodies or defecating into the watershed. If people violate it, they will be punished by the gods by drying up the water source (drought) and, in such cases, forcing the village to move to a new residence location. Also living in the common cultural space of the Central Highlands region, the Xtieng and Ma people divide

water sources into three types, like the Cho Ro people: well water, water in small streams, and water in large streams or rivers. In daily life, the Xtieng and Ma people all have the same concept that these water sources are controlled by gods. People exploit those sources to serve daily activities as well as production, but if anyone violates and pollutes the water source, that person or the whole community will be punished.

Fourth, in animal husbandry. In their economic activities, due to many different reasons, in most ethnic groups living in the territory of Vietnam, there is no social division of labor. Therefore, pluralism in economic activities is an outstanding feature of the communities here. For local ethnic minorities in the Central Highlands region, there is also pluralism in economic activities, specifically both agriculture, natural exploitation, and animal husbandry. Livestock raising among ethnic minorities in the Central Highlands is not the main economic activity but mainly meets daily needs, especially for festivals. The Mngong people previously raised elephants to pull wood or transport forest products. The Xtieng and Ma people raise dogs for hunting; however, it is not common. Raising livestock for meat is a factor that local ethnic groups aim for. They raise livestock mainly freely, without barns. Livestock are usually chickens, pigs, goats, buffaloes, cows, etc. for the purpose of slaughtering during sacrificial ceremonies. Free-range livestock farming is a way to express their knowledge because they live mainly in the natural environment, so this is also expressed in livestock farming.

From the above analysis, it can be seen that local knowledge of ethnic minorities in the Central Highlands plays a huge role in the socio-economic life of ethnic groups in the region's development process.

4.3. Evaluating local knowledge in life in Vietnam today

Currently, the majority of ethnic minorities in Vietnam, due to many different reasons, have a small population, living mainly in highlands and remote areas, especially difficult areas, far from cultural centers. They have little access to advances in science and technology, so they still preserve a lot of local traditional knowledge. The diversity of local knowledge leads to cultural diversity, as in the case of ethnic minorities in the Central Highlands. Local knowledge is also a cultural element of an ethnic group, contributing to enriching the culture of that ethnic group. But the culture of an ethnic group always changes, partly due to the needs of life; old customs and experiences are no longer suitable, requiring change. To properly evaluate the role of local knowledge, we have some clearer comments on the contributions of local knowledge to economic development, social stability, and preserving and promoting cultural values. cultural traditions of ethnic groups.

Firstly, All societies, whether at high or low levels of socio-economic development, have the same task of meeting the minimum human needs of food, shelter, clothing, transportation, and other needs. demand for spiritual culture. But the ways to meet those needs are not the same. However, there are problems that are common to humanity, and to satisfy those needs, people must know how to organise production. In ethnic groups where social division of labour has taken place, specialisation in production is very clear. Each community, depending on its specific conditions, participates in production activities in a specific field. Such division of labour leads to high specialisation, often in places where the commodity economy is developed, but also leads to dependence on production. In Southeast Asia, because there has traditionally been no social division of labour, residents in an area often show pluralism in economic activities. Like many ethnic groups in Vietnam, traditionally there has been no social division of labour, so there is no clear separation

between population groups in economic activities. The Central Highlands region has a self-sufficient economy, as clearly shown by its economic activities. Each village is an economic complex, including agricultural production, poultry raising, buffaloes, cows, etc. During the production process to ensure community life, each village and hamlet accumulates for itself the experience (local knowledge) along with other elements of religious beliefs that contribute to the culture of the community. The ethnic minorities in the Central Highlands are milpa residents, with no social division of labour yet, so the local experiences they have accumulated, in addition to contributing to cultural diversity, also contribute to the development of the region. economic development. In an area, there are many forests and mountains, so in daily life, forests are not only a living space but also a very important source of food. Because the forests in the Central Highlands region have very diverse flora and fauna, In a context where economic activities depend heavily on forests, the local knowledge accumulated by local communities has contributed to economic development. The classification and exploitation of forest products are experiences for the next generation to continue living and being attached to the forest. The forests are mostly naturally grown, so they are very diverse in types and sizes. Classify forests to have separate behaviour for each type of forest. Old forests are forests with many large trees, are perennial forests, and are often watershed forests, so exploitation is limited. Those forests are often sacred forests, the residence of deities that protect the community, so exploitation is prohibited. Each community, depending on its cultural traditions, has its own taboos. It is for the benefit of the community that they are all conscious of protecting the forest. Anyone who violates will be prosecuted based on customary law. Communities depend on forests, so they cannot exploit forest recovery excessively. Once forests are exploited, it will cause unpredictable disasters. Today, science has shown that unplanned forest exploitation will lead to forest destruction, resulting in flash floods and floods that directly affect human life. In the Xtieng, Ma, and Mngong ethnic groups, there is a similar way of classifying forests, that is, dividing them into old forests, young forests, ghost forests, and watershed forests. The Ba Na, Co Ho, Xo Dang, etc. divide forest land into five types (including glade forest, medium old forest, bamboo forest, and bud forest). So it can be seen that ethnic minorities in the Central Highlands are very conscious of protecting forests. They are attached to the forest land; they are "forest eaters," but they do not destroy the forest when exploiting it. They only exploit certain types of forests and have specific regulations to not destroy the forests. In particular, in protecting our living environment, forests are often associated with "sacred" elements to protect. The association of forest exploitation and protection with "sacred" elements is found in most ethnic minorities in the Central Highlands, where forests are a source of food, construction materials, medicinal plants, etc., and forests are also a source of food, construction materials, medicinal plants, etc., which is a shield protecting community life. When people have "faith" and "fear" of gods, this is the best way to protect the forest. On the other hand, people are always attached to the community; they can sacrifice for the community, but people are very afraid of being abandoned by the community. Thus, local knowledge related to forest protection and exploitation helps us see its role in economic development and social stability among ethnic groups here.

Secondly, Exploiting vegetables to serve daily life also shows awareness of the importance of protecting the livelihood of the whole community. In the society of ethnic minorities in the Central Highlands until the early twentieth century, there was no deep differentiation, so forest land was owned by the entire community. Therefore, all members of the community are free to exploit it but are not allowed to destroy it, such as by cutting down

trees to pick fruit or digging up trees in the forest to plant at home. When picking vegetables, only pick young leaves, and only shoot bamboo shoots that have just grown up. Do not break bamboo shoots that have grown high enough to have burns. Or when digging tubers (like tubers), use a spade with a long blade, dig on one side along the root all the way down to the tuber, then pull up the inclined base of the dug hole to get the tuber up. When picking up the tuber, the digger will cut the base of the vine (close to the tuber) and stick it down right where he just dug it, then cover it with soil so the plant can continue to grow for the next crop's products. This is mandatory and has become the awareness of the community when exploiting natural products. When hunting animals, people only hunt within community-owned forests, and they only hunt small animals. Exploitation of forest resources occurs in the context of an "extractive" economy, but as a rule, people only exploit what the community allows. Exploiting forests to serve the lives of the family and the whole community, but not "exterminating" them" - these are lessons for life today, when forest land is increasingly shrinking and forest trees are also depleted one day. The exploitation of forest resources to serve life took place over a long period, when the "expropriation" economy was still the main mode of operation for ethnic groups that had not yet progressed to sedentary farming or settlement. Mandatory rules in communities are expressed in customary law, which is exploitation but not destructive, exploitation to serve life, but only to the extent that it can be exploited for future generations. There is still that resource to exploit. Sustainable development thinking only appeared in the twentieth century, but regulations on exploiting forest resources among ethnic minorities in the Central Highlands have been implemented for a long time. Clearly, the knowledge that ethnic minority residents here have accumulated in the process of producing and exploiting forest resources has contributed to economic development and stability.

Thirdly, Water is a very necessary human need. In the Central Highlands ethnic minorities, because farming is mainly done in the rainy season in the form of extensive farming, there is no irrigation system. Water exploitation for production is only seen in wet rice-growing ethnic groups, requiring irrigation systems, so water mainly serves daily life. In order to stabilise and develop, finding suitable areas is essential. For the Mnong, Ma, when choosing a location to establish a village, it must be near a river or stream. Establishing a village near rivers and streams, first of all, provides a convenient and easy water supply for daily life, helping the community to survive for a long time. On the other hand, rivers and streams also provide food sources for the community. In traditional societies, where there is no law, customary law plays an important role in regulating relationships within the community. It is easy to see that even though there are customary laws, they must always be associated with sacred elements. In a community that has been immersed in cultural space since childhood, the community's customary laws are also transmitted in that cultural environment. Therefore, combining sacred elements with punishment is the most effective way to maintain community stability. Clearly, in the context of ethnic groups still at low levels of development, incorporating sacred elements in all areas of life is an optimal method. Local knowledge in community management on exploiting and preserving water resources is to avoid pollution. People are conscious that when an animal dies, they will not throw it away indiscriminately but bury it to avoid pollution. So it can be seen that, while the community's understanding of environmental hygiene is still very limited, people are still conscious of burying animals. This is a habit worth appreciating in the current context, when environmental pollution is one of the most difficult problems in modern society. When someone uses hunting methods, especially fish hunting, and may use fish poisons that pollute

the water source, they are warned to avoid possible negative consequences. That knowledge is clearly accumulated in practice, but it is also very effective in protecting domestic water sources for the whole community. The fact that people rely on accumulated experience to choose locations near rivers and streams to meet the needs of domestic water, transportation, and exploitation of aquatic resources for the community and to establish villages will help ensure community stability in production and other aspects of life.

Fourthly, In order to stabilise and develop in their specific conditions, ethnic minorities in the Central Highlands have experience in health care. People know how to exploit medicinal resources to treat diseases. In the forest, there are plants that can be exploited as medicine. Each ethnic group has its own experience in exploiting medicinal resources to serve the community. In the general context, when modern medicine does not have the conditions to meet the needs of the people, it is necessary to exploit that precious source of medicinal herbs to treat diseases. Not taking good care of your health can lead to illness, especially epidemics, damaging your health and wealth. When there is an epidemic, people must pray to the gods and find the causes of the epidemic. In many cases, they have to move. This is a difficult problem when, in an area, there are many communities living together. Therefore, the local knowledge accumulated in medical treatment actively contributes to stabilising community life.

Fifthly, To stabilise the community and develop socio-economics, the accumulated experience has been expressed in a law that bears a strong local impression and is closely associated with the community. That is customary law. This is an unwritten code that covers all aspects of community life. Customary law is a compilation of community knowledge into regulations that are mandatory for all members of the ethnic community. Customary law has strong local elements associated with a specific community. In essence, customary law is the local knowledge of a community. The regulations in customary law are mandatory for all members of the community. As a member of a community, you not only have a responsibility to follow customary laws but also to help other members do so. The customary laws of ethnic groups are imbued with ethnic cultural elements. Each ethnic group has its own customary laws; there is no common customary law for all communities living in specific natural conditions, ranging from actual production activities to the organisation of social life and relationships. Others have formed local knowledge. Through the realities of production life and social activities, that local knowledge gradually becomes customary law for community members to implement. Customary law, as a tool to manage and regulate social relationships during a certain historical period, reflects social reality. Law reflects society through the will and aspirations of the ruling class, so it imposes that will and aspirations on the entire society. Customary law is a product of social practice, compatible with each small, limited community, and a product of the community. The customary law of ethnic minorities in the Central Highlands is a harmonious expression between management and self-governance, between imposition and voluntariness; it shows the consensus of the community in all aspects of economic and social life. and culture. On the other hand, in the enforcement of customary law, there is always a connection between education and punishment. This can be considered a valuable experience in the treasure trove of local knowledge in community management.

5. Conclusion

Thus, traditional knowledge of ethnic groups is closely linked to a locality, a community and is always changing. Local knowledge is a cultural element of the ethnic group, contributing to ethnic cultural diversity. Ethnic minorities in Vietnam mainly reside in

mountainous areas, this is a strategic area that plays an important role in the cause of building and protecting the Fatherland, which is a place with potential in all aspects to contribute to building the country. In the current context, although local knowledge no longer plays as important a role as in traditional society, it still contains many cultural characteristics, and still operates in current life (such as in health care, in social stability, in community cohesion). Local knowledge along with social resources contribute to the strength for ethnic groups to develop. Local knowledge of ethnic minorities in the Central Highlands has now changed, however, it is necessary to consider which elements are still appropriate and which are not appropriate in order to plan conservation policies, as consider it a resource for social development of ethnic minorities in the current context.

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