

Tourism at Sisatchanalai District by Community's Participation

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Abstract

The purposes of this research were to study the community's participation in Tourism Management in 10 areas: 1) knowledge on tourist attractions in the community, 2) the importance of tourist attractions in the community, 3) the participation in decision making policy and designating the tourism directions in the community, 4) pride in the fame of tourist attractions in the community, 5) the influence of the community's tourist attractions towards ways of life, 6) the respect and value in community's tourist attractions of the tourists, 7) the change of community's ways of life from the tourists, 8) cultural learning of the tourists visiting the community, 9) the fair income distribution from community's tourism, and 10) the tourism incomes which were spent on the community's public utility development, and to study the impact of tourism towards the community on tourism resources, society, culture and economy.

The population of the study was 19,579 people who live within Sisatchanalai Historical Park, Wat Phrasirattanamahathat and Phaka National Park. The samples were 90 people by purposive random sampling. The data were collected by five scale questionnaire and structured in-depth interview and observation and analyzed by using percentage, mean and standard deviation.

The findings were as follows:

1) The participation of the samples in tourism development was in a high level and when considering by each item, it was found that knowledge on tourist attractions in the community was very high in mean scores whereas the participation in decision making policy and designating tourism directions in the community was the lowest.

2) Community's tourism impacted the community's economy in the item from selling food and other goods, the socio culture in terms of mutual learning exchange of the people both within the community and outside the community, and impacted tourist resources, historical tourist attractions in the form of love and conservation of community tourist attractions by watching out for the antique search.

Keywords: community-based tourism participation, community's potential in tourism management, impact of tourism towards community

1. INTRODUCTION

The constitution of Kingdom of Thailand in 2007 mentioning the right of the community in Article 66 and 67 in that individuals who live in the community, local community should have the right to conserve or restore the custom, local wisdoms, local and national arts and good culture; they should take part in the state in conservation, maintenance, and utilization of the national resource and biodiversity.

Tourism by community's participation is one of activities that promote the people to gain the right to access the resource utilization and to protect the local resource by avoiding the negative impact to community as well as environment. Bringing the existing local resources into use for the tourist resources under the conceptual framework in tourism will enable the actual tourism development, promote economic stability, strengthen and benefit the community in many ways such as handcraft promotion, local products, culture and technology transfer, income distribution, local custom and tradition restoration, resource conservation in the community. Itsichaiikul stated that tourism by community's participation is tourism in tourist attractions in the community. The importance of community's participation or the community who operates tourism by themselves is to make tourism to develop the community and stimulate the local economy through employment and income distribution. At the same time, it can help the community acquire the know how to carry out the management under the principle of self-reliance (Itsichaiikul 2003: p. 23). To promote tourism in the community by allowing the people to manage by themselves called Community-based Tourism in the past two decades expanded quite speedily and it seems that in the future the trend will be increasing and be more networking. It is believed that tourism that owns by the community (Community-based Tourism) will be one of the potential tourism managements by focusing on the community's participation process and supporting the natural resource conservation including tourism resources by themselves and at the same time it benefits community's economy (Hormchuen, 2007, p. 3).

Sisatchanalai District, Sukhothai Province, has both cultural and natural tourism resources that attract not only domestic travelers but also overseas

ones. There are quite a big number of tourists visiting this place in which partially the tourist attractions are located and the research team had the opportunity to visit the place and wondered how the people in the community access and receive the benefit whatever they have participated. Initially, the research team has inquired the villagers who live in the community where tourist attractions are located and found that there were so few villagers involving in tourism and there has not been any establishment for concrete tourism operation. Therefore, from the research team's personal point of view, the people who live within the tourist attractions should be opened for the tourism management as the owners of the areas who have been affected by the existing tourism. For this reason, the research team is interested in studying the community's participation in developing tourism in Sisatchanalai Historical Park, Wat Phrasirattanamahathat and Phakha National Park. The prospective areas are Tambon Sisatchanalai, Tambon Nong Or, and Tambon BarnKaeng according to the concept of Community-based Tourism by expecting that this study will benefit the communities in tourist attractions development by local participations.

2. OBJECTIVES

The purposes of this research were as follows:

1. to study the community's participation in tourism management
2. to study the impact of tourism towards the community, tourism resources, society, culture and economy.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Samples

The population of the study was 19,579 people who live within Sisatchanalai Historical Park, Wat Phrasirattanamahathat and Phaka National Park (Data from Tambon, Sukhothai Province, 2013: Online). The samples were 90 people involving community's tourism by purposive random sampling comprising 15 community leaders from three Tambons, 45 community committee from three Tambons, and 30 villagers from three Tambons.

3.2 Research tools

The research tool for this study was questionnaire comprising 2 parts: question to ask for general information and question to ask about community potential in tourism management in 10 areas by using 5 rating scale (1 = the least important, and 5 = the most important). The questionnaire was made by the researcher team and examined by the experts and 20 questionnaires have been tried out for the validity analyzed by Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. The value of Alpha Coefficient was 0.76 which was acceptable.

The structured in-depth interview was to collect the data on community potential and the impact of tourism towards community. The research team figured out the quality of research tool to test the validity by experts and then interviewed 20 villagers in Tambon Hadsio, Sisatchanalai which has similar

context to the areas that the researcher team conducted the study and analyzed the validity in each item by using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. The Alpha Coefficient was 0.76 which was acceptable.

The observation form on participation can be seen from the external behavior of the people, group behavior and community's environment.

3.3 Data analysis

3.3.1 Percentage was to distribute frequency on community's participation from the informants.

3.3.2 Mean, standard deviation were to measure the tendency to the norm and measured the distribution of social, cultural and economic data of the informants.

4. FINDINGS

The findings found that learning exchange activities to study the community's participation on tourism management from in-depth interview behavioral and environmental observation enabling the research team to perceive the opinions on participation and recommendation towards tourism management as follows:

1) General information of the samples: most of the samples were females with 40 years of age, their educations were primary ones; they live in the community more than 15 years; their incomes were 1000-5000 Baht.

2) The opinions towards community tourism management of the samples found that they participated in tourist attraction development in 10 areas as follows: knowledge on the tourist attractions in the community, the importance of the tourist attractions in the community, participation in decision making policy and designating the tourism direction in the community, pride in the fames of tourist attractions in the community, the influence of tourist attractions in the community towards ways of life, the respect and value on tourist attractions in the community, the change of ways of life from the tourists, cultural learning from the tourists who visit the tourism attractions in the community, the fair of income distribution from tourism in the community, and incomes from tourism benefiting the community's utilization overall were in a high level.

3) The opinions towards the participation on tourism management of the samples classifying by items found that mean of knowledge on tourist attractions was the highest and mean of the participation in decision making policy and designating the tourism directions in the community was the lowest.

4) The recommendation on ideas towards the participation process in tourism management development of the samples ranging from the most to the least in 5 areas as follows: 1) the roads within the tourist attractions areas should be dust free and widen, 2) tourist attractions should be publicized thoroughly and widely, 3) homestays should be developed within the tourist attractions by the villagers, 4) the community should watch out for the people who excavate for the antiques in the tourist

attractions, and 5) the community should create a more friendly atmosphere for the tourists.

5. DISCUSSION

This research found that after having organized 3 learning exchange activities in three communities where the tourist attractions are located, the people have knowledge and understand the community-based tourism process. They can comment and recommend the ideas in tourist attractions development in the community by themselves. The findings were interesting and could be described as follows:

1) From the organizing activity in learning exchange within 3 communities, the findings from the opinions and interview were consistent with the principles of community based tourism management as follows: 1) the communities are the owners, 2) the villagers participated in the decision making and designating the directions, 3) promote the pride in themselves, 4) uplift the quality of life, 5) have the environment sustainability, 6) keep the identity and local culture, 7) incur learning of people from different cultures, 8) respect in different cultures and dignity of mankind, 9) fair returns to the local people, 10) having the income distribution to public utilization (Tourism institutes by community. 2013) which was consistent with Dinkhoksoong who studied tourism management by community: case study Hardchaba, Tambon Chaba, Muang District, Ubonratchathane Province and found that the principles of tourism management by Chaba villagers opened the opportunity for the community's participation in operation both issuing rules and regulations, including the benefit resulting to the incomes and employment of the community's members. It also strengthened the villagers' awareness of the importance of resources and the cooperation in the group; the communities themselves also gained indirect benefits from tourism in terms of developed utilization (Dinkhoksoong. 2006: abstract) which was consistent with Hormchuen who studied Tourism Management by Community at Barn Sasorn Moo 7 Tambon Naphoklang, Khongjiu District, Ubonratchathane Province found that the community took part in the form of committee selected by the villagers without any payment. The activity organizing model has brought in culture and local wisdoms application for the inheritance and the people in the community were aware of the value as well as transferring the pride in community's identity towards tourists and created value added to community's tourism (Hormchuen. 2007: abstract).

2) From the interview, it was found that the communities suggested their ideas for community tourism management as follows: 1) The roads within the tourist attractions should be developed without dust and roads should be widen, 2) Tourist attractions should be publicized thoroughly and widely, 3) Home stays should be developed in tourist attractions by

the villagers, 4) The communities should watch out for the people who excavate for antiques, 5) The communities should create a more friendly atmosphere for the tourists, which was consistent with Khotchasawat's study, who did research on the study of tourism management at Barn Huay Hi, Maehongsorn Province and she found the recommendation in tourism management problem solving was still problematic in terms of transportation concerning about rough roads leading to villages. During rainy season, people cannot commute by ordinary transportation. In addition, the communication gap between the villagers who are unable to communicate with foreign tourists and some tourists cannot eat local food (Khotchasawat. 2006: p. 118). As one can see that community-based tourism management comprised essential principles as follows: The villagers who are stakeholders should choose, decide, plan and operate tourism management by themselves. Moreover, they should be able to recommend the way to solve problems and develop tourism management by themselves, which was consistent with Sarobol's study, who stated that community-based tourism is the alternative way in tourism management by community who take part in designating the directions of tourism based on the ideas that every villager is the owner of the resources and be stakeholders from tourism by bringing existing resources in localities such as nature and history, culture, tradition, ways of life, ways of production in the community as the capital or factors in appropriate tourism management including people's potential development to have knowledge, ability and essential role in operation from decision making, planning, implementing, lesson conclusion and emphasizing the sustainability to the next generation and benefiting the locality by thinking mainly of the nature support (Sarobol. 2013).

6. RECOMMENDATION

Issues gained from the research

1) People in the community are interested in operating tourism management in their own localities due to the ties and being with the tourist attractions throughout including their partial incomes but the problem is the participation due to the fact that all tourist attractions have been taken care of by Fine Arts Department and the natural tourist attractions in the National Park have been taken care of by the Department of National Park.

2) This research studied on leaders, community's committee, people from various backgrounds. They had limited knowledge in community-based tourism management and some accepted that this was so new to them and most importantly, there were no such organization or group setting in community-based tourism management concretely. It is said that this research was the starting point and igniting ideas for the community as an alternative way in developing the tourism management of the community in which people in the community can participate.

RECOMMENDATION AND APPLICATION OF THE STUDY

1) For the organizing of learning exchange activities on community-based tourism management, all 10 areas can be applied with the communities who are interested in tourism management in general; however, it depends on the context and readiness of each community.

2) Organizing of the learning exchange activities on community-based tourism management every time, they should not emphasize only content or knowledge gained from doing the research or from the study of the research only but they should give the importance of the process and experience in organizing the activities which are needed and be developed at the same time.

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RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

1) There should be a study to develop knowledge and develop community-based tourism management in other communities.

2) There should be a study to follow up the change or the progress of community-based tourism management.

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