

**Development of Community Based Tourism Management at Pakro village,
Singhanakorn district, Songkhla province. Thailand**

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Abstract

The objectives of this research were to survey tourism resources that related to history; storytelling; and lifestyle in creation tools for conservation and restoration environment and natural resources at Pakro district, to find out potential tourism resources originated from community and develop to be additional ecotourism of Songkhla province, and to form up a team of Pakro members in order to serve and support ecotourism in the area. This study was conducted using qualitative research method, Participatory Action Research. The area of this study was at Pakro sub-district. Representative of community members in Pakra sub-district were sampling of this study. Data collection was conducted by holding meeting, focus group discussion, field survey, and in-depth interview. The result of this study shown that Pakro community found additional tourism resources exist in the area. Moreover, these tourism sites have potential to be new alternative of ecotourism resources of Songkhla province. Besides, in responding to improve living quality of Pakro people, a set of ecotourism committees has been formed up and formally approved by Singhanakorn marshal to fulfill their duty towards community. In consequently, tourism route has been developed representing culture and lifestyle of Pakro community in terms of folk art, local food transformation, and sugar palm course. This tourism program is aligning with culture and lifestyle of Pakro people; therefore it would be great if community can improve for betterment in order to create sustainability.

Keywords: Thailand, CBT, Songkhla, Participatory Action research.

1. Introduction

Songkhla is a border-province in the lower part southern of Thailand. Pakro is one of Songkhla's sub-districts. It is a well known area of people has very little income and the poorest in Songkhla due to condition of environment and natural resources decadent. It has been realized that human activities of livelihood and their careless often cause the environmental impacts as well as degradation. In fact, the participation of people in community plays an important role in protecting the environmental and natural resource. The realization of Pakro people that they are an important part to take responsibility for natural resource and environmental conservation in their place as a tool for life quality improvement aligns with the project “The development of ecotourism for conservation and restoration of environment and natural resources at Pakro community” which was introduced by Prince of Songkhla University with the same purpose of improving quality of life and strengthening the community. Consequently, the community based tourism has been initiated in order to respond to the need and awareness of Pakro people towards their community.

2. Aims

- 2.1 To survey tourism resources that related to history; storytelling; and lifestyle in creation tools for conservation and restoration environment and natural resources at Pakro district,
- 2.2 To find out potential tourism resources originated from community and develop to be additional ecotourism of Songkhla province,

2.3 to form up a team from Pakro community in order to serve and support ecotourism in the area

3. Theory, concept of the research and related findings.

The importance of Communities Based Tourism

According to *Responsible Ecological Social Tour (REST) (1997: 14)* defines CBT more as: “tourism that takes environmental, social and cultural sustainability into account. It is managed and owned by the community, for the community, with the purpose of enabling visitors to increase their awareness and learn about the community and local ways of life”.

The (CBT-I) (2009) points that CBT means the capacity of local people to develop directly tourism in their communities, for the benefit of communities, the environment and their guests.

Goodwill and Santilli (2009:12) absolutely agree that CBT as tourism owned and/or managed by communities and intended to deliver wider community benefit.

In addition CBT is a unique type of tourism that seeks to address the question of “how can tourism contribute to the process of community development?” Rather than “how can community benefit from tourism?” CBT aims at maximizing profit of investors and it is more concern about the impact of tourism on the community and environmental resources. The CBT is emerges from a community development strategy, using tourism as a tool to strengthen the ability of rural community organizations that manage tourism resources with the participation of the local people.

Participatory Action Research

Whyte (1991) defined Participatory Action Research as a process of a person or an organization participate in study, solving problem together with researcher through research process from the beginning till the end of discussion result.

McIntosh and Goldner (1986) mentioned about requirement for management community participatory consist of direction for adding living standard of people in community which is result from benefit of tourism economy, development of infrastructure and accommodation for relaxation for the owner as well as visitor, establish development program which is align with social, culture, and economy of the community, and

affirmation on the development center of research is suitable with the area objective

4. Methodology

This study was conducted using qualitative research method, with referring to procedure of Participatory Action Research introduced by S. Prapatnitisarn (2004) which are creation the relation of partnership among researchers, developers, and community leaders, Analyze the issue using (Participatory Rural Appraisal : PRA), Participatory Planning for Action :PPA and Participatory Action and Evaluation: PAE

The research design was implemented steps by steps as followings;

In initial stage of this study, researchers team start building connection between community leaders, representative of community and related stakeholders for this project in order to make alignment about the issue that going to study, improve or solve, and to clear understanding about roles and responsibilities of each person. At this stage invitation letters for attending meeting was distributed to the community representatives such as village leaders of Pakro sub-district as well as related stakeholders in private and government sectors.

In responding to the objectives of survey tourism resources and find out its potential for the purpose of development as new ecotourism resource in Pakro sub-district, the process of focus group discussion came to take place. The representative from community members of 6 villages in Pakro sub-district were participated in providing information about tourism resources and its potentiality. Each of representative community members proposed potential tourism resources of their village to the researcher and field survey team.

The stage of selection attractive destination has started when completed the field survey. 50 participants from representative community members were fully support in deciding prominent tourism resources of the community. In the same time there was training and exchange learning experience among researchers and community members about community based tourism as well as ecotourism.

Once tourism resources were selected, the researchers and community members worked together to come out with tourism program at

Pakro. Then both parties made an appointment to test route and to publicize about agenda to the tour agency, entrepreneur, provincial public relation and related sectors at this stage.

There was a team set up for tourism development at Pakro for convenient in administration organization.

The area of this study was at Pakro sub-district, which was including 6 villages under one head of a group of villagers. This area was selected in responding to strengthening community by having alternative additional career path.

This study was conducted between March and September 2013.

The target group and sampling for this study consist of village headman and representative of Pakra sub-district community members. Each villages comprises of village chief and his assistance, all together 30 people. However, number participants 150 when participating in selecting tourism resources and form up a team committee for ecotourism development.

Data collection was conducted by holding meeting, focus group discussion, field survey, and in-depth interview.

5. Study/experiment results

The result from survey indicated that Pakro sub-district has additional ecotourism resources prior to the existing in the area which is manifest that community careless about it in the past. On the other hand, it is a good chance for community to start and continue on conservation and restoration environment and natural resources. Moreover, these tourism sites have potential to be new alternative of ecotourism resources of Songkhla province. As a result, one day trip program of tourism route has been developed and tested by ASEAN Future Leaders Summit which was considered a good introduced of tourism route that reflect culture and lifestyle of Pakro community. Lastly, a team of committee with 15 members for tourism development was successfully assigned and formally approved by Singhanakorn marshal.

6. Summary and explanation of results

Since Pakro is an area of people has little income and poorest in Songkhla province due to the decadent of environment and natural resources. In

addition most of people in Pakro received income according to their primary occupation. Most of them are fisherman, farmer and agriculture. In some occasion they had to face jobless when the weather is not support. Therefore by having an additional or alternative career path to them it leads to strengthening their income and it can be one of the causes to improve their life quality. The development of community based tourism at Pakro is responding to conservation of environment, natural resources, culture and lifestyle where in the tourism route express all these things as sample of activity program;

- Sugar Palm Activity: Demonstration of chopping, stewing, and dropping sugar palm into the mold and showing how to bind the sugar palm leave to be a roof. Show how to make traditional Thai dessert of which ingredient from sugar palm.
- Local food transformation: Such as making local preserve seafood of “Pla Pang Dang” and “Kung Tom Wan”
- Folk art: Performance of Classic Thai Tune. Traditional local Thai song of “Plengbok”
- Cruising activity to understand community folklore.
- Worship sacred monk of “Tan Po Mahaloi”

The above tourism program is the result of community based tourism management by Pakro people as initial stage however they can practice and study more on what to improve, what are the weakness and strength. Throughout the research also revealed that this can be another career path of the community that does not need their primary job or change their lifestyle whereas they can value natural resource exist in the community.

Aforementioned tour program has been introduced to the 150 tourists from ASEAN countries who participated in program “ASEAN Future Leader Summit” in October 2013 where Pakro community managed by themselves and it was proof that the development of community based tourism management in Pakro can create sustainable and strengthen the society.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 Continuity university outreach program 1 faculty, 1 strengthening
- 7.2 Improve what needs to improve conserve the existing value because development does not mean to change everything.

8. Acknowledgements

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