
Potential Development on Agro-tourism Participated by Khlung Community, Chanthaburi, Thailand

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The objectives of this study were to: 1) explore potential and costs contributing to community-based agro-tourism; 2) promote farmers to utilize their potential and existing costs for the management of agro-tourism; 3) construct partial tourist spots in order to be an alternative for tourists; 4) generate supplementary incomes for local people; and 5) create learning networks on agro-tourism among eastern provinces of Thailand. This study employed participatory action research instruments in this study included learning exchange venue, survey, interview, focus group discussion, and experiment on tourism program. Participants in this study consisted of 20 persons who were fisherman, teachers, students, community leaders, and housewife group member. Results of the study revealed the following: 1) There was the occurrence of strong tourism groups and the coordination in fundamental management. This comprised fisheries group, culture group, etc. Besides, there were supporting agencies inside and outside the community e.g. local administrative organization, Eastern Research Coordination Center, tourism agency, etc. 2) Costs or potential in community-based tourism management i.e. water source, canals, herbal plants, and Vietnamese language etc. 3) A community-based tourism model was obtained. This comprised sustainability in agricultural resources and environment; rehabilitation of local culture and tradition; and programs/routes and the management system which could be truly practiced. 4) People in the community were aware of the participation in tourism management. This enhanced racial identity and created pride of Yuan ethnic group. 5) The body of knowledge and data obtained from results of the study could be connected with the system of Yuan dialect rehabilitation of the community. 6) There was the coordination among tourism networks in communities of eastern Thailand for sustainable tourism. This was in the form of knowledge exchange and extension to the public. 7) Generate revenue from community-based tourism and promote reputation for the community.

Keywords: development, agro-tourism, alternative tourism, community participation, participatory action research

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Introduction

Agro-tourism is an outcome of the current world sustainable development which causes the occurrence of 3 aspects of tourism development comprising: 1) needs for the conservation of environment and natural resources; 2) needs for the tourism market on learning; and 3) needs for human resource development. It is expected that a number of tourists in the world will reach 1,561 millions in 2020. Besides, there is a tendency of an increase in a number of tourists who wish to learn culture/tradition, lifestyle, of the place of their destination (Payakwichian, 2009).

The Thai agricultural sector has a tendency to be very important occupation in the future more than ever. This is because agriculture is a source of food production, energy generation, and a social basis of most population. Also, the alternatives of farming will be diverse more than ever. It can be said that the farmer in this age will become to be the “agricultural entrepreneur” more than before. There will be the adaptation of farming-from traditional cultivation to the emphasis on the managerial administration e.g. farm management, agricultural resource management, and existing agricultural capital management (Brain Corpus Institute, 2011). In fact, agro-tourism is consistent with the modification and the construction of alternatives for agricultural careers as the “agricultural entrepreneur”. This will be consistent with the agro-tourism development having an appropriateness with future changes. Chanthaburi is farmed for farming such as a source of many kinds of fruits production/processing and jewelry business. There are a lot of tourists visiting Chanthaburi every year such as there were 870,482 and 986,755 tourists visiting Chanthaburi in 2009 and 2012, respectively. (<http://www.eastosm.com/tabid/948/language/th-TH/Default.aspx>) Hence, it can be said that Chanthaburi has predominate potential having a high tendency to be developed in terms of agro-tourism.

Khlung municipality is 24 kilometers away from Chanthaburi city. It is the passageway to Trat province, the eastern most of Thailand. In the past, Khlung was a community having diverse races and culture (pluralistic culture). That was, there were Thais, Thais-Chinese, Thais-Vietnamese’s living there one-hundred years ago. Nowadays, Khlung municipality has been receiving awards successively on cleanliness for more than 10 years. Potential and possibility of Khlung community to be developed in terms of agro-tourism are as follows:

1. Koh Loi community most people there are Vietnamese and some of them can speak Vietnamese Language. This can be a charm of community way of life tourism.
2. There are a beautiful estuary and abundant mangrove forests as the habitat of birds, monkeys, red hawk, etc.

3. Most communities in Chanthaburi are engaged in fisheries and oyster, granular ark, soft-shell crabs farming. This can be learning source capital of agro-tourism as well as natural food source capital.

4. People there are hospitable with unity.

All of these factors make Khlung community to have needs for development to be an agro-tourism source. This can be done by the management of their way of life and cultural origins to have the occurrence of tourism in the community.

Objectives of the Study

Specifically, this study aimed to:

1. Explore potential and capital contributing to the management of agro-tourism by the community;
2. Promote the community to employ their existing potential and capital for the management of agro-tourism; and
3. Construct an agro-tourism source with potential so as to be an alternative for tourists and extra income for the community.

Research Question

1. How do you employ existing potential and capital in the community to manage participatory tourism management?
2. What should be an appropriate agro-tourism model and community-based agro-tourism?

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study focused on community-based agro-tourism management so it was in the form of participatory action research. Locale of the study was at Koh Loi community, Khlung district, Chanthaburi province. Time span of this study lasted 12 months.

Materials and Methods

Procedures	Objectives	Research instrument	Population
1. community investigation and preparation	To find an appropriate area in terms of physical aspect and community coordination	Focus group discussion and survey	- Community leaders - Community Teachers - Municipality representatives
2. A venue on the construction of mutual understanding	1. To construct understanding about the project with the community, community	Learning exchange venue	- Community leaders - Community representatives

Procedures	Objectives	Research instrument	Population
between the community and concerned agencies - Find existing capital/potential in each community	leaders, and concerned agencies in the project area 2. To perceive opinions and suggestions of stakeholders in the community 3. To find cooperation for project implementation		- Teachers - Municipality representatives - The youths
3. Holding a venue for planning on participatory data collection and data collection with the community	1. To make project implementation has a guideline for clear operation in order to achieve the goals 2. To lay roles and function of the research team 3. To collect data used for tourism program design	- Learning exchange venue - Focus group discussion - In-depth interview - Survey	The community research team comprised: community leaders representatives of all groups, teachers, the youths, and municipality representatives.
4. Data collection	To find capital data/community potential used for tourism management	- Field survey - Preparing a social mapping - In-depth interview - Focus-group discussion	The community research team
5. Community researcher meeting (once a month)	To follow up project implementation, find problems encountered, and mutual planning on problem-solving	Learning exchange venue	The community research team
6. Education trip to successful communities in agro-tourism	To find an idea adopted for a construction of an appropriate model	Education trip	The community research team
7. Activities on knowledge enrichment such as tour guide training and homestay developing	To prepare readiness in community tour guides and homestay developing	Training	The community research team
8. An analysis and planning on agro-tourism management program	To find an appropriate model for agro-tourism management program planning	Learning exchange venue	The community research team
9. Experimental activities on tourism. Conclusion and creative assessment	To prepare readiness for community-based agro-tourism	Try-out the experimental program on tourism	The community research team
10. The venue on the construction of	To find and appropriate model of each community	Learning exchange venue	The community research team

Procedures	Objectives	Research instrument	Population
an appropriate model for agro tourism			
11. Preparation of public relations such as brochure, electronic media, and landscape improvement	To widen public relations	Preparation of advertisement or public relations through various media	The community research team
12. Making conclusions and project assessment	To perceive positive changes and the thinking method of each community before and after the tourism development	Learning exchange venue	The community research team
Preparation of report document and dissemination	To disseminate to the public	Report document	The community research team

Results of the Study

According to the study, there were outcomes and impact factors as follows:

1. There was the occurrence of a strong tourism group in which they could construct the primary management system. Besides, there were concerned agencies inside and outside the area supporting the tourism group e.g. the municipality, the local administrative organization, academic institution, and tourism agencies.

2. Data which were potential capital in community-based tourism management included community context, agricultural style, and resources such as mangrove forest and fisheries methods, resource capital such as water sources, canals, forests, mountains, and herbs, culture/traditions such as Vietnamese language, Vietnamese costume, and Vietnamese food. In addition, the community had diversified power group which could be connected as the co-power for the management of community-based eco-tourism. It could be seen that important components of the tourism community in the study area were rather perfect in terms of natural resource capital and human resource capital. Likewise, Suansri *et.al.*, (2011) claimed that an important component like social capital of the community can make community-based tourism be successful due to: 1) The community has abundant resources; production ways sustainably rely on natural resources; and the community has a unique identity. 2) Strong community organization; the social system is well understood; local people have a sense of belonging and participate in the development process. 3) The community has an organization or work mechanism for tourism management and

tourism can be connected with community development. Also, there is fair income distribution. 4) Tourism activities can construct perception and understanding about different ways of life and culture. Indeed, each component connects and related one another which will make community-based tourism be attractive and sustainable.

3. The obtained community-based tourism model included the following:

3.1 Theme of tourism focused on the construction of the sustainability in agricultural resources and environment as well as the rehabilitation of the community culture/tradition. This aimed to make outsiders or tourists to perceive, learn and touch it through tourism.

3.2 There were programs, routes, and management system which could be applicable. The tourism program involved community cultural tourism and natural resource tourism. The following were the primary management system: public relations, measure setting for community tourism, the management of local tour guides, and fair pricing. As a whole, the tourism program consisted of the following:

- 1) Welcome tourist at the Sacred heart Convent
- 2) Visiting convent architectural style visiting and the story telling about background of the community. Cycling around the community (Visiting the hall of religious and dietary observance, the clean market, and city pillar shrine)
- 3) Taking a boat down a stream to learn fisheries of Vietnamese and visit mangrove forest, mollusk/crab farms, and fishing
- 4) Staying overnight (a homestay in the sea) and night activities included cotton fish luring, prawn luring, mullet catching, and community story telling (1,000 baht/person/night for service charge, breakfast an evening meal included).

3.3 Enhancement of ethnical identity and construction of pride the Yuan ethnic group (Vietnamese) because Yuan ways of life was part of the tourism program.

3.4 Local people began to be alerted in the participation in tourism management.

3.5 The body of knowledge and data obtained from the study could be connected with policies of the municipality and the local administrative organization which could support on budgets, personnel, and place.

4. Participation in the community-based tourism networks in eastern Thailand.

5. It could make reputation and earn extra incomes for the community.

Discussions

1. According the development of community capital and potential, results of the study revealed that the community has enough capital for value added to make tourists touch, perceive, and learn the community identity. Examples are diverse fisheries-oyster farming, soft-shell crab farming, and traditional fisheries-mullet fishing, shrimp stabling, and fumble cram grouping. In addition, the community has abundant mangrove forests and scarce interesting animals and plants such as brahmyny kite, sarus crane, fire fly, and herbs plants. There were clear changes i.e. improvement of garden landscape, competent story tellers, listening to others' opinions, systematic thinking/working, and tourists/community common rules and regulations, etc. for a number of tourists visiting the community, weekend tourists were limited to not more than 20 persons per visit. This is because the community also wants to have a normal life. Also, a number of tourists visiting there in the rainy season are limited with regards to safety as a priority. This conformed to a concept of Sittijinda (2008) which proposed that the management of sustainability of tourism in the community, the community should have a clean and stable standpoint, not only for income generating. That is, the community may consider its capability to cope with a number of tourists and set common rules and regulations with tourists or construction awareness of community respectfulness.

2. Construction of the community identity in tourism management. To be an agricultural community particularly on fishermen's way of life and predominant ethnic group/culture, all of these could be employed as a guideline for community-based tourism (eco/agro/cultural tourism). This conformed to an idea of Suansri (2005) related to an important issue of community-based tourism management. That is, there are unique natural tourist attractions as well as cultural/historical sites concerned with the natural environment conservation. Importantly, the community must put the importance on the combination of the goals of sustainable community development and natural resource/environmental conservation. This also conformed to a study of Sittijinda *et.al.*, (2014) which found that the management of agro-tourism by the community is the construction of pored to the etheric group and they begin to do organic farming more than before.

3. A guideline for tourism management by the community is an important factor showing efficiency, continuity and sustainability which will happen to the community. According to results of the study, it is clean that the community can manage tourism for tourist relaxation and development of agriculture, rural areas, and community economy. Aside from the construction of pride of the community, it also helps conserve natural resources and environment. However, there is a limitation which may hinder the management of tourism by the community due to the following:

3.1 Lack of experience and continual development such as public relations, quality local tour guide, construction of impression to tourist, and there is a limitation of group forming. Therefore, if concerned agencies help construct activities encouraging the occurrence of continual development, it may impress tourists and the community may find another channel for the development of community tourism. Examples are the promotion of community products and public relations for tourism. Sittijinda (2008) had conducted a study and found that tourism should be employed by the community to be a public policy of the community. Examples are a policy of the local administrative organization and a policy of the community organization council.

3.2 Community participation and the process of continual learning are also important factors.

In this study, people in the community were energetic to participate in the community project at the initial stage but later on they began to fade away. This might be because they had no much available time to do project activities due to their routine jobs. Hence, it should have activities attracting them to participate in the community project. This conforms to Thongma (2004) who cited about the principles of the operation on tourism by the community that it should emphasize on all concerned parties that should have a continual learning process among them this aims to develop appropriate and clear community-based tourism.

3.3 Connection with agencies, alliance networking, and support channel finding from other agencies as well as community-based tourism in Rayong, Chonburi, Trat, and Sakheo are new to people there. Therefore, connection with various groups or internal/external agencies is not so concrete. However, people in the community formed a tourism group led by community leaders which could be considered as a network but it needed group connection rather than an individual.

4. Agro-tourism can encourage the youths to have good attitudes toward agricultural careers and a sense belonging. Finding of the study showed that the youths of 10-16 years old were interested in the project participation. The implementation process made them perceive good capitals existing in their community e.g. herbal plant, way of life, tourist spots, culture/tradition, etc. this made them be proud of their community and will not ignore agricultural careers as a source of food for man.

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