The Study of Routes of Community – Based Tourism at Ban Bangnu, Ka lai Sub-District, Takua Thung District, Phang Nga Province, Thailand

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to study potentials of the community to develop as a community-based tourism (CBT), and routes of CBT of Moo 6, Ban Bangnu village, Kalai Sub-district, Takua Thung District, Phang Nga Province, Thailand. The results illustrate that the village has potentials to develop as a CBT village. It has infrastructure of roads, water supply, electricity and new tourism attractions. It also has physical potential attribute including safety to travelling, the rich and the reputation of the tourist attractions. For environment preservation potential, it is sufficient in sound quality management including noise far from the industrial area, urban, or noisy activities; air quality management including smoke and dust free, no smell spread and no annoying in the tourist attractions. The potential of economic and social attributes: the places are clean, and safe. There are friendly people in the village. Cultural potential attribute is a unique tourist attraction. For natural potential attributes, it is natural beauty and beautiful scenery. The environment potential attributes is good. There is an opportunity for tourists to learn the way of life of the community. The management potential attributes, the village has only information signs for tourist attractions. Roads are sufficient, but electricity, water supply, toilets, parking areas, alarm signs, emergency, and the first aid equipments are evaluated at moderate level. For the routes of CBT, the community suggests four places to visit as two programs of one-day trip, and seven-day trip programs.

Keywords: Routes, Community-based tourism, tourist attractions
1. Introduction

During the year 2011-2014, it was found that tourism revenue grew at an average rate of 18.9 percent per year in Thailand, but tourists stayed only in the main tourist destinations including Bangkok, Chonburi, Phuket, Krabi and Chiang Mai, respectively (the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2015: 11). It can be seen that even though Phuket has been ranked as the second destination of Thailand for tourists to visit. However, Phang Nga province, which has a continual area with Phuket, has been ranked as the ninth destination of visited provinces. If there is an extension tourist attractions of Phang Nga province for tourists, it will increase the number of tourists in Phang Nga province. Using the year 2016 as a base, the occupancy rate in December 2017 in the southern part of Thailand illustrated that Krabi province had the highest occupancy rate at 88.96 percent followed by Phuket and Phang Nga provinces, which occupies 81.73 percent and 76.02 percent, respectively (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2018).

Ka lai Sub-district Administration Organization in Phang Nga province announced the three-year development plan (year 2016-2018) by establishing guidelines for promoting tourism in order to increase revenue. The opinion of the community development experts also suggested that Moo 6, Ban Bangnu village, Ka lai sub-district, Takua Thung district, Phang Nga province, hereinafter called Ban Bangnu village, should be a new place of tourist attraction. In addition, the Ban Bangnu village headman, commented that tourism routes of Ban Bangnu village would be developed as a community-based tourism (CBT). Therefore, this research aims to study the potential of the community to develop as the CBT, and to create the routes of CBT of Ban Bangnu village. There are three objectives of this study. The first objective is to study general information of Ban Bangnu village. The second one is to assess the potential of the community to develop as a CBT tourist attraction. The third objective is to create tourist routes of Ban Bangnu Village. The contributions of this study are to indicate the potential of the community and routes of CBT of Ban Bangnu village, Kalai Sub-district, and Thai government may use this study to shed light on a model to support Ban Bangnu and other villages to develop as CBT. After this, literature review will be presented, especially on community-based tourism, and the potential of the community to develop as a tourist attraction by the community. Then, the conceptual framework will be constructed.

1.1 Literature review

Ministry of Tourism and Sports (2015: 8) states that in 2013, the number of tourists in Thailand was 26.5 million, which was the 7th highest ranking of the total tourists of the world, but decreased in 2014 due to the political crisis and the economic crisis in the European countries. The main foreign tourists are from 10 countries with a market share of more than 60 per cent, including China, India, the United Kingdom, Malaysia, Australia, the United States, Japan, Germany, South Korea and France.
The survey results of foreign tourists in the 4th quarter of 2017 find that most of tourists’ activities were visitation to natural area, massage and spa, and visitation to cultural sites, respectively. Interesting attractions were entertainment, Thai food, spa, massage, and cheap price of product, respectively. Whereas, transportation was not satisfactory, in terms of public transportation (road, rail) and quality of taxi service (Tourism Authority of Thailand, Tourism Industry Council of Thailand and Faculty of Economics, Chulalongkorn University, 2018).

Ministry of Tourism and Sports (2015: 10) indicates that there is a problem in the distribution of income and concentration of tourists. During the year 2011-2014, travelers are still concentrated only in major tourist destinations, including Bangkok, Chon Buri, Phuket, Krabi and Chiang Mai. It finds that 94.2 percent of all foreign visitors who travel to Thailand are concentrated in 20 provinces. In addition, the tourist market is still the same group that has to rely on revenue from the top 20 tourists, especially China and Russia.

In 2018, tourism policy mentioned the policy of income distribution from tourists to local cities. With the goal of adjusting the proportion of tourists (Thai and foreigners) in the main urban areas per city after 64: 36 to 60: 40 in 2018. One of the measures to support these policies is the ongoing promotion of CBT in the social enterprise model (Svetarundra, 2018).

1.1.1. Community-Based Tourism (CBT)

CBT is tourism that takes into account the environmental sustainability. Society and culture of the community are directed by the community, Managed by the community, for the community, and the community has a role as the owner to manage and care for visitors (http://www.krabi.go.th.krabi2015/m_file/lifetravel/25.pdf, 14 December 2016).

The elements of CBT consist of seven elements. The first elements, there are organizations / mechanisms of tourism management by the integration of people in the community to be a leader, participation of members and communities in tourism development. The second elements, there is a sustainable tourism management system of a community. A community rules for tourism management, can be linked to other aspects of community development, and empowers people in a community to compliance with rules and regulations of CBT. For the CBT concept, continuous marketing and public relations should generate tourism income for sustainable communities.

The third element, CBT supports the development of quality of life and economy of the community, diversifies income generated from community tourism fairly and creates opportunities for additional income to a community.

The forth element, CBT promotes community culture. Tourists have information and knowledge about local culture. There is a transfer of community culture with rules and guidelines to respect and protect the culture. Tourism are promoting, conserving, restoring and inheriting culture.

The fifth element, CBT contributes to the community’s environmental maintenance. Tourists have information on natural resources and the environment. There is a design of tourism activities that take into account the management of natural resources and the sustainable environment. Manage natural resources and the environment sustainably and conserve biodiversity, prevent and manage pollution problems.
The sixth element, CBT creates tourism activities, which can create learning. Understanding of lifestyle and community culture for visitors creates awareness and knowledge in natural resource and culture conservation, both for people in the community and visitors.

The last element, CBT provides good and safe service in terms of accommodation, vehicles, local media, home owners and good coordination between people in the community and tourists.

1.1.2 The potential of the community to develop as a tourist attraction by the community

Suansri (2003) discusses the four key elements of CBT: natural resources and culture, community organization, management and learning. Thongma (2012) discusses the strengthening of the community in accordance with the principles of sustainable development. There are 3 aspects: economic, social, cultural environment. The important attribute that will lead to sustainability are the collection of knowledge, wisdom, inheritance, utilization. Sustainability will be developed by pride of ownership, participation in community resources, and the process of learning to work together. The National Tourism Policy Committee (2016) sets five criteria for the tourism management by communities, which consist of: the management of social economy, good quality of life, conservation and promotion of community cultural heritage, systematic and sustainable management of natural resources or the environment, and the quality of tourism services by the community. Sungrugs, Plomelersee, & Warabamrungkul (2016) mention that the development of tourism requires the role of the five components: government, private sector, tourists, community, and educational institutions. Variety of tourist attractions, activities, safety, friendliness and facilities should be considered to motivate tourists. Chaiyachak, Sakulsananarong, & Hemsuwan (2016) determine the composition of the potential of CBT based on three principles as follows: tourist attraction (Attraction), access to tourist attractions (Accessibility), and amenity facilities. Mung (2017) studies community potential in ecotourism management, which finds four components: villagers have leader(s) with transformational leadership style, villagers have created a learning community, villagers have a quest for knowledge that empowers, and villagers have practical learning.

Naowan and Klang (2018) study the potential of tourism resources of the community Bang Krasan Sub-district Bang Prin District Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province in terms of attracting tourists by natural resources, culture, and tradition community life. Poonak (2015) studies community potential in tourism management by communities of Amphawa Floating Market in aspects of environment, politics, economics, society and culture, it finds that in an environment aspect, the community has tourism activities that contribute to learning in the environment and natural resources. In politic aspect, the community cannot manage systematically and cannot clearly divide their responsibilities. In the economic aspect, the community has more income from tourism management by the community. In social and cultural aspects, it finds that exchanges of learning between local communities and tourists to realize the value and importance of life style, local traditions and culture. Simakhajornboon (2016) discusses the tourism route as a guide for travelers. The result illustrates the routes, which easily see or visit for tourist attractions and points.
of interest. These routes may be used in conjunction with the normal routes of the local people, or may set a new route, especially for tourists.

From the literature review above, we evaluate the potential of the tourist attraction by the communities of Ban Bangnu village. Using the guideline of methodologies of the above scholars. The methodology of this research uses in-depth interview, focus group, and exploratory method by using questionnaires. This research studies the potential of community as CBT focus on aspects of physical characteristics, maintaining environmental quality, economic and social, art and culture, nature, agriculture and management characteristics.

From the above related research, we construct the conceptual framework (Figure 1) below. The conceptual framework starts with the guidelines for assessing the tourism potential by communities of Ban Bangnu village. After that, routes of CBT of Ban Bangnu village are proposed. In this research, it is derived from the research methodology in which the stakeholders in the area are involved.

*Figure 1: Conceptual framework*

2. Methods, Results and Discussion

This section is divided in three parts. After explanation of methods used to both collect and analyze the data, in the second part, the results will be presented. Discussion will be presented in the final part of the section.

2.1 Methods

This research used documents, which provided by Ka lai Subdistrict Administration Organization, and the Ban Bangnu village headman. In-depth interview used for villagers to obtain the most comprehensive, accurate information. Focus group also used for villagers to confirm the data from in-depth interview and to find villagers’ consensus. The survey method also used for stakeholders including government officials, villagers, and tourists. The questions have both closed-ended and open-ended questions for giving freedom to the samples to fully comments. The in-depth interview guidelines are developed based on literature review, which cover the content and can be divided into three sets as follows.

The first one is the basic information of Kalai Sub-district and Ban Bangnu village, which has been assisted by the President of Kalai Sub-District Administration Organization, and the Ban Bangnu village headman and local researchers in the research team. The second one is an in-depth interview, and focus group questions’ guidelines. The results from in-depth interview and focus group activities shed light of four places, which should be the routes of CBT, namely, “Roy Prabudhabath” (or Budha’ Footprint), “San Pho Ta Raet” (or Pho Ta Raet Shrine), Ton Mok waterfall, Suan Pa Pho Tham monastery. After that, the focus group, divided for each of the above tourist destination. An interviewing for the opinions from tourists and government officials in the area on the potential of being a tourist attraction by the community with sub-issues consisting of physical, maintaining environmental quality, economic and social, art and culture, nature, agriculture, and management characteristics. The final method is questionnaires for inquiring opinions of tourists who come to visit Ban Bangnu village during the period of April - May 2017 on the potential of being a tourist attraction by the community. The details of key informants of this study illustrate on Table 1 below.
Table 1 Key Informants, Position of Key Informants, and Number of Key informant(s)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Informants</th>
<th>Position of Key Informants</th>
<th>Number of person(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government Officials</td>
<td>1. The President of Kalai Sub-District Administrative Organization</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Community development specialists</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Tourism Development Assistant</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Teachers of Ban Bangnu School</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Other Government officials in Ban Bangnu village</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People in “Ban Bangnu” village</td>
<td>1. People in the village</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Abbot of Suan Pa Pho Tham Monastery</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Ban Bangnu’s village headman</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Former village headman of Ban Bangnu village</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourists visiting on “Ban Bangnu” village</td>
<td>1. Overview Ban Bangnu village</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. San Pho Ta Raet Shrine</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Roy Prabudhabath</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Ton Mok Waterfall</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Suan Pa Pho Tham Monastery</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2. Results

2.2.1 Study general information of Ban Bangnu village

General information of Ban Bangnu village, it is one of 12 villages located in the area of the Ka Iai Sub-District Administration Organization, Ka Iai sub-district, Takua Thung district, Phang Nga province. It is a plain, surrounded by hills, streams of water, which come from the rich forest. Ninety per cent of the villagers are Chinese descent. Basic services for the community are Ban Bangnu school, and “Suan Pa Pho Tum” Buddhist Monastery. Important traditions of the community are New Year festival, Songkran festival, festival of the tenth Lunar month, Loy Krathong festival, vegetarian festival, and Chinese New Year festival. The basic infrastructures of Ban Bangnu Village are electricity, public telephone, mobile phone, news tower, village reading room, community hall, multi-purpose building, sufficiency economy learning Center, the public market which is called "Lad Long Lae @ Bangnu" and the drinking water factory under the brand name of "Varoon." There are several villagers who preserve local wisdom.

Mr. Ton Ngern Siew Tin, in the reign of King Rama VI, brought rubber trees from Malaysia to plant in Kalai sub-district. He was the first to be pioneered mining in the community, which is rich with tin, using hundreds of workers come to dig the ore searched along the eastern plains, which is the location of the village, today. He was also the first group to build the Chinese
architecture, namely, “San Pho Ta Raet” Shrine, which is worshiped by ancient traditions. Most of the villagers have respected to the Chinese tradition because they are Chinese descent.

The landscape of Ban Bangnu village is located in lowland. Most areas are suitable for rubber and palm plantations, orchards and surrounded by the Bangnu hillside, which has a rich forest condition with a tropical monsoon climate. It is influenced by the Southwest monsoon with the Northeast monsoon, which has rained almost all year round. There are generally two seasons, including rainy and summer seasons.

The total population was 422 people including 202 males, and 220 females, respectively. The main income of the population comes from rubber, palm, and fruit plantations. The other population’s income is from trade, employment, and government service. Income Households have not less than 30,000 Baht per person per year.

2.2.2 Evaluate the potential of the community to develop as a tourist attraction by the community of Ban bangnu village

According to the potential physical attribute of the tourist attractions of Ban Bangnu village, it has the potential for travel safety and road quality. However, government officials still suggest developing the road quality and signs directions to the village. In addition, the village has nature, culture and environment, as potential tourist attractions that are most attractive.

Potential of environmental quality preservation criteria, the village is without noise disturbance. For examples, it is far from the urban industrial area. For solid waste management, in the perspective of tourists, its management is at highest level. For examples, there are enough waste warning signs and trashcans. However, in the government officials perspective, it is at a moderate level. For air quality management, both tourists and government officials agree that the air is free from dust and smoke, no smell, diffusion and annoyance.

Potential of economic and social criteria, in the perspective of stakeholders, the tourism’s value is satisfaction in community’s cleanliness and safe, the local community’s friendly. For participation in tourist attractions, tourists are satisfied with participating in activities, such as walking nature, walk to see the way of life of local community, swimming, watching art, culture, etc. For the perspective of government officials, it is both direct and indirect community benefits in participation management.

For the artistic and cultural potential, in the perspective of tourists, the village is the most unique tourist attraction. While government officials suggest that the village has its unique identity of history and culture. It also has local engagement and opportunity to learn the way of life, traditions, culture with the community's delight at a high level.

For the natural potential, tourists and government officials agree that tourist attractions in the village are the most abundant natural attractions. While government officials add that the village has the most beautiful scenery as well.

Community potential according to agricultural criteria, while tourists’ opinion is that the village has unique tourist attraction, good environment and allow tourists to learn about
community life at the highest level. However, government officials illustrate that this potential is at a high level.

Potential of tourism management, tourist’s opinions find that there are signs, which explaining the information of tourist attractions. There are facilities in the level of most adequate in the tourist attraction, such as electricity, water supply, bathroom, parking lot, road. While the government official’s opinions find that only the signs explaining the information of tourist attractions and roads are at a high level, but the electricity, water supply, bathrooms, and parking lots are at a moderate level. For safety issues for life and property, the tourists suggest that there should install disaster alarm and first aid equipment at a high level.

2.2.3 Creating tourist routes by community of Ban Bangnu village

The results suggested by the villagers illustrate that there should be two tourist programs. The first program is a one-day trip that tourists are able to visit all four places. The first tourist attraction, tourists should pay respect to the “San Pho Ta Raet” shrine. Then tourists should visit to pay respect to the “Roy Prabudhabath” or the Budha’s footprint. After that, tourists should visit “Ton Mok” waterfall. The final tourist attraction, tourists should visit “Suan Pa Pho Tham” Monastery. The other program is to organize a travel program for seven days’ trip. This program starts with three days of activities at “Suan Pa Pho tham” Monastery, such as sand dredging, horse care, or picking the stout. By experience with foreign tourists visiting the monastery, they prefer to walk into the forest to find natural herbs and then cook food by themselves. The remaining 4 days are tourism in three other tourist destinations mentioned above.

2.3. Discussion

This research studies the community potential of tourist attraction by the community of Ban Bangnu village. Although most opinions of tourists and government officials are in the same direction. However, there are some different levels of opinions on some issues. For examples, tourists find that the community has sufficient potential to develop as a tourist attraction by the community. But government officials have illustrated that those potentials are not sufficient. These different opinions of tourist and government officials may be beneficial to the community in being considered by the government to support the budget for development the village as a tourist attraction by the community. For examples, the quality of roads, while tourists’ opinion states that there is a high level of safety in travel, but government officials perceive only moderate safety. As well as the clarity of the route sign, solid management, current electricity, water supply, bathroom, parking lot, alarm signal disaster, first aid equipment, which government officials deem to be at a moderate level. Therefore, it is expected that in the future there will be more government budget allocations in these matters to the village. Combined with the enthusiasm and cooperation of the villagers in the community, Ban Bangnu village has the potential to develop as a tourist attraction by the community. Nevertheless, in our opinion, the waste management system should be fully prepared before running the village tourism operations. Since the issue of the waste management
system will not receive the attention of all stakeholders in this research. It is probably because tourists who come to the village are still few. This problem has not yet occurred. However, the problem of waste management is a problem that occurs in many tourist attractions, therefore this problem should be considered in the early stage.

Community potential issue, which is not mentioned in this conceptual framework, but we find from observing and interviewing villagers. It is the readiness of the community’s cooperation. The readiness can be reflected from the cooperation of “Tod Pa Pha” activity. The purpose of this activity is construction of two roads to the village. By this activity, villagers gave both in cash, and in kind donations. For in kind donation, villagers contribute their physical labor to participate on construct the roads by themselves. The distance of 900 meters of the first road is the Buddha's footprint to Suan Pa Pho Tham Monastery. The distance of the second road has 150 meters. It is between the three way junction, linked between the budha’s footprint and the monastery. For in cash donation, the villagers donate their money to purchase all of raw materials of the two roads construction, without government budget allocation. The other participation in activities of villagers in the community, such as “Pracharat” market activity or "Lat Long Lae @ Bang Nu" which reflects the strength of the community. We suggest that for tourists who have only one day to travel in all four places, but some places require walking. Therefore, tourists should wear sneakers to prevent slippers. If tourists want to swim on Ton Mok waterfall, they should take other day to travel in other places. However, this two-day trip is not mentioned by the results of this research. For the seven days’ trip, we agree that it is suitable for tourists who are interested in Buddhist activities, having an adventurer, like hiking, and easy to eat.

3. Conclusion

This paper studies Ban Bangnu village to find whether this village has tourism attractions. It finds that the village has attributes of community potential as CBT. The results also find that there are four routes of CBT, namely, San Pho Ta Raet, Roy Prabudhabath, Ton Mok Waterfall, and Suan Pa Pho Tham Monastery. In addition, the tourism programs suggested by the community have two programs. The first one is the one-day trip program. The other one is the seven-day trip program.

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4. References


