MODELING SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT FOR COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM: A CASE STUDY OF FLOATING MARKETS IN THE LOWER CENTRAL THAILAND

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Abstract: This paper explored the historical background of 4 floating markets in the provinces of the Lower Central Thailand, studied the management of the markets and initiated a model for sustainable management for the markets. The study employed mixed methods of qualitative and quantitative approaches. In-depth interviews and questionnaires were used for collecting the data. The samples included 24 key informants from the tourism industry, public sector, and communities around the floating markets, and 306 entrepreneurs at the floating markets. The historical background of these floating markets indicated the strong relationship between the local communities and the river culture, which had later been affected by land transport development. The study also found that the floating markets were managed by use of the dynamic of community committee, with the involvement of local government and private sector. A sustainable management model for the floating markets was also suggested in this study.

Keywords: Floating Market, Model, Sustainable Tourism.

I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism promotion has been crucial for the economic development of Thailand due to its revenue generation of several hundred thousand millions Baht each year. Several infrastructure and capacity development projects have been carried out since 1960 in order to accelerate the tourism activities and to meet needs of the industry, as well as in response to the vision of Thailand as the Tourism Capital of Asia [1]. Fast economic boosterism path of tourism planning and development during the past decades have also brought about abrupt alterations to living of people in economic, social, cultural and environmental dimensions. Social fabrics, local cultural identity and environmental conditions have been threatened at high degree. The management of tourism has recently inclined to place more importance upon protection and safeguard of social and environmental dimensions along with sustaining the economic values. Community-based tourism has become a core of management that encourages local community people to get involved in managing their resources in a manner that sustainably maximizes natural, social and cultural resources and maintains integrity.

Floating markets have been proliferated as tourist attraction that blends Thainess and local identity of people living along the river basins Central Thailand. Tourism activities at floating markets are appealing resulting growing of domestic and foreign tourism demand and economic impact, such as income circulation within communities. This paper aimed to study the background of community floating markets in the provinces in lower Central Thailand, the management of the markets for tourism, and to develop a management model for community floating market towards sustainability.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Global Tourism Situation
Over the decades tourism has experienced continued growth and it has been expanding diversification to become one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world. The meetings of Global Assessment of Tourism Policy and Economic Intelligence Unit forecasted that the international tourist arrivals would rapidly increase, whereas the tourism markets would become diverse with different ranges of tourist groups in all social classes, genders, ages and economic levels [2].

2.2. Sustainable Tourism Management
Modern tourism development applies the global principles of sustainable development [3]. The ten principles of sustainable tourism development include the following: (1) use of resources at a rate balancing their carrying capacity; (2) reducing over consumption and wastes; (3) maintaining natural, social and cultural diversity; (4) integrating sustainable tourism with local, regional and national plans; (5) promoting equity in local income distribution and economic base; (6) incorporating local community involvement; (7) consulting stakeholders and the public; (8) training staff; (9) use of information as guideline for marketing, making decision and monitoring; and (10) undertaking research.

2.3. Sustainable Community- Based Tourism Management
Sustainable community-based tourism development is an action of developing tourism in such a way that causes least negative impacts to community’s environmental and social conditions, while also considering quality of experience and satisfaction of
visitors that will lead to economic, environmental and social sustainability[4].

2.4. Modeling the Management of Tourism
Modeling refers to creating models for physical, mathematical, or otherwise logical representation of a system, entity, phenomenon, or process as a basis for simulations. Modeling support engineers in developing data as a basis for managerial or technical decision making. There are many types of models, for instance models in psychology, mathematics, graphic models and 3D modeling. Modeling for policy implementation consists of 2 types: management modeling and process modeling. The first one focuses more on organization capacity than policy and control planning goal of organization. The latter one in this context refers to process modeling for bureaucratic system, which is devised through complicated process, formal relationship pattern and merit system [5].

2.5. Sustainable Tourism Development Planning
Planning is a process designed for plans that aim for anticipating and ordering changes in the future. The process of formulating tourism development plan is defined by its goals, objectives and guidelines or strategies. Sustainable approach for tourism development planning should integrate all aspects of social, cultural, environmental and economic dimensions so that the tourism development can meet successful growth. Therefore it is essential that a tourism development plan incorporates the following six supporting plans: sustainable natural resources development plan; (2) sustainable built environment development plan; (3) sustainable tourism business development plan; (4) sustainable tourism marketing development plan; (5) sustainable local participation development plan; and (6) sustainable integrated development process to apply in different sites.

2.6. Chaipattananurak Conservation Project
Chaipattananurak Conservation Project is serving as the reminiscence of the past of the communities of Ampawa District. The project aims at conserving art, traditional way of living and tangible and intangible cultural assets of the Ampawa residents, by encouraging their involvement through community activities and promoting local producers and traders. Some of the project’s initiatives include the following: (1) the capacity development of local place as the eco-tourism attraction named the Agricultural Demonstration Farm, an orchard that demonstrate integrated fruit farming based on local wisdom, in linkage with other tourist attractions in Samut Songkram Province for instance King Rama II Memorial Park; (2) community shops, the space where local traders sell their locally-produced produces and offer local eco-tourism services; and (3) promotion of integrated tourism development that calls for all stakeholders’ involvement into the management within the destination within the balance and self-reliance framework under the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy.

2.7. Local Participation
The principles of local participation cover 2 approaches [6]. The first approach represents freedom of people by motivating them to understand causes of problems, acknowledging them for leveraging their comprehension on related systematic factors, creating a space that facilitates development of local participation in the process of seeking for alternative solutions, and developing and educating them for vision abounding harmony in living with nature. These principles provoke local people to have sense of value and pride of their place and to evaluate and decide by themselves whether tourism development and activities to be projected are appropriate for their context and responding to their needs. The second approach regards legal framework and regulations, particularly those concerning the spatial environment in relation with the livelihoods of the locals. The approach focuses on fair and transparent implementation within the reinforcement of related laws.

2.8. Related Studies
A study of tourism policy formulation and development promotion used the case of long stay tourism, conducted with international tourists of over 50 years old[7]. The samples were international tourists from 3 regions and 1 country including Europe, Scandinavia, North America and Japan. The objectives were to examine long stay tourism demand and supply, opportunities and limitations with respect to the promotion and development; to study supporting legal issues and marketing of the public and private sectors; and to determine conceptual framework for activities and facilities development for long stay tourism in Thailand. The findings revealed that the Japanese tourists concerned safety and security, perceived risks in disasters, crimes and wars. Moreover, their expectations involved comfort and convenience of staying and daily activities, facilitation, healthcare service, availability of international standard hospitals, and Japanese language ability of service providers. Additionally, the study found that the Japanese were interested in learning history and local culture, and in immersing the local activities during their stay. Another study investigated integrated, area-based natural and environmental resources management planning, using the case of Phuket, Krabi and the areas around the Songkhla Lake Basin[8]. The study reported the management planning of the provincial level had its capability to improve for more effective results. It was noted that there were some weak points in the areas around the Songkhla Lake Basin, those of which could be improved within the same and new structures and in the legal limitations. The study of
KlongKlon Sub-district, Muang District, Samutsongkram Province about the management of eco-tourism in the place found that it focused on harmonious living between people and the mangrove forest as their last land of natural resource. However, some obstacles concerned the financial problem, lower carrying capacity of the place and problems in the process of local participation, in particular with their lack of understanding of eco-tourism. The findings thereafter suggested the community started the management for nature-based tourism and then developed the eco-tourism, in order that the local people would receive less negative impacts yet maximized benefits from the tourism in the area, while learning how to adapt and build up self-reliance [9].

Hass [10] chose Niue Island in South Pacific Islands as the case study for examining the sustainability of eco-tourism activities in small areas. The study found that the tourism of the island was considered sustainable only in the aspects of environment and socio-culture. The economic sustainability was uncertain as a result of the island’s limitation in accessibility due to its remote location, which caused frequent flight schedules and higher travel expense. The study recommended the island receive higher-spending and high-income tourists, and consider its carrying capacity for the tourism development and the balance between the environmental, social, cultural and economic aspects.

The study of Sindiga [11] looked at the alternative tourism and sustainable development in Kenya. The finding reported the reciprocal benefits between the conservation of bio-diversity and tourism. Whereas the conservation supports the tourism in the area, the induced income is also spent in conservation projects and community development.

The findings proved that ecological and alternative tourism could be applied not only in small areas but also in larger areas. Moreover, alternative tourism development can contribute to local community participation both in the conservation and tourism businesses.

III. DETAILS EXPERIMENTAL

3.1. Materials and Procedures
The study used both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The qualitative data was gathered by in-depth interview with 24 key informants from the tourism industry, public sector, and communities around the floating markets. The quantitative data was collected by use of questionnaires with a total of 306 samples who were the entrepreneurs at the floating markets named as follows: Donwai Floating Market, Ampawa Floating Market, Thanam Kamphob Floating Market and Samphan Nam Floating Market.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
The historical background of the community floating markets located in the provinces in the lower central part of Thailand explained that these communities had long a long history of housing settlement along the river. The living pattern and the cultural landscape reflect close relationship between the local people and the river. There has been the development of housing, transportation and trading in association with the river. The development of automobile-based transportation has moved the centralization of local community activities including trading from the river to the areas closer to the land. This has affected the communities living along the river and the original floating markets. By this, the local communities have sought for alternatives for solving the problem. There has therefore been a permutation of original floating markets in serving to the tourism industry. The study found that most of the floating markets in the communities have the central committees responsible for the management of the markets, whereas the local people were involved in different forms of activities led by the community leader and local administration offices. The markets have also been supported in budget and trainings by the central government through the local governmental agencies, local tourism authorities, and local commercial and other private organizations. The survey of services and facilities of the markets revealed that the markets offered a variety of goods and tourism activities, travel information and security. One of the advantages of the floating markets is their location in close proximity to Bangkok and main tourist attractions en route. The findings recommended that the market should maintain their incorporation of local people in the management, which would lead to the strength of the communities. Service standards for floating market tourism and long-term planning that recognize, truly understand and apply the local social and cultural context and needs, and future situations, must be taken part. Involvement of public and private sectors still is crucial in planning and supports. Importantly, it is essential that the floating markets themselves remain their cultural identity and public relation still is required.

The quantitative findings revealed that the floating market with the highest score of sustainable management practice was Ampawa Floating Market (Mean = 3.31), followed by Sampha Nam Floating Market (Mean = 3.18), Donwai Floating Market (Mean = 3.07) and Thanam Kamphob Floating Market (Mean = 2.98).

It could be concluded from the findings of the study that the factors of sustainable management in the context of revived floating markets for tourism included the following: (1) the communities themselves, in that the markets were developed from the original floating market by a merit of the location on the river bank and significance of traditional arts,
culture and history; (2) participation of local people, public and private organizations, where local people played their role in caring the environment and preserving the cultural resources; the public sector gave supports in terms of public relation, budget, trainings and law-related activities in reinforcement of the ecological conservation; the private sector took part in supports of finance and human resources trainings in sustainable management; and the cooperation of local government, central government and private sector in the management for balance and shared benefits; and (3) the management and administration of the floating market committees, in that the representatives from different groups of stakeholders performed effective management of resources, had planning of high quality, transparent and efficient planning practices and systems. The study suggested that the floating markets develop shared areas for community activities, design floating market products, such as shops, performances and activities, in harmony with the communities’ physical and cultural characters, improve the landscape, and develop standards in the aspects of services, facilities and management process.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper contributed to some recommendations as follows:

1. The strength of communities applying tourism into their cultural identity, in this case, the floating markets, can be sustained through the adoption of the King’s Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy, in which the communities are practiced and learned through lessons on their own, not by influences from the external.

2. Development of community floating market should be carried out along with other aspects of the communities, by not leaving involvement of related stakeholders behind, considering the areas’ carrying capacity and maintaining visitors’ satisfaction.

3. Long and short term plans are required for resources management that assures shared benefits for all.

4. Most floating markets located along the lower river basin of the central part of Thailand are similar in the physical and cultural characters, therefore the communities should also brainstorm for other attractions of uniqueness within their original wisdoms and way of living, which help lead to the community competitiveness and stronger characters in tourism.

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