

Community Participation in Sustainable Tourism at Doonlamphannon-Hunting Area, Na Chueak District, Mahasarakham Province

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this research were 1) to study the level of community participation in sustainable tourism management in the Doonlamphan Non-hunting Area 2) to analyze the ways to promote community participation in sustainable tourism management in the Doonlamphan Non-hunting Area, Na Chueak district, Maha Sarakham province. The population and sample of the study were the people around the non-hunting zone and staff working in the Doonlamphan Non-hunting Area. Research instruments were questionnaires and focus group discussions. The statistics used in this research were descriptive statistics and the hypothesis testing of inferential statistics.

The results of the research showed that people in the community living around the Doonlamphan Non-hunting Area contribute to sustainable tourism management of the Doonlamphan Non-hunting Area. Overall, all aspects were at a low level ($\bar{x} = 2.16$), and a guideline for promoting participation in sustainable tourism management of the Doonlamphan Non-hunting Area was to provide opportunities for people in the community to participate in the management in various fields. For example, there are meetings and focus group discussions together. Additionally, there are public relations on various projects for the community to participate in the activities of the area, and also find ways to develop and conserve sustainable tourism sites with participation from all parties. The results of the hypothesis testing revealed that community participation in sustainable tourism management in the Doonlamphan Non-hunting Area, classified by gender, age, education level, and occupation. There was a statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level.

Keywords: Community Participation, Sustainable Tourism, Sustainable Tourism Management

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable tourism is an integral part of sustainable development. At present, scholars are attentive to sustainable tourism due to the degradation of tourist attractions and the environment. This has created awareness of the conservation of tourism resources and changes in the tourism forms that turn to nature tourism or ecotourism. Tourism has applied the concept of sustainable development at various levels namely both at the regional level, national level, local level, and used in both government and private sectors. (Ranee Esichaikul, 2014) However, how sustainable tourism can be nowadays? It depends on parties to take part in and work together to enhance tourism sustainability. That is to say, tourism must go through a process of management and development of all elements involved. The agency supporting the tourism industry must apply knowledge from various sciences as integrated fields of law, economy, society, politics, marketing, agriculture, management, psychology, geography, and environment, etc. (Therdchai Choibamroong, 2015) The developed measures must be both proactive and reactive in stimulating the development of tourism on the basis of available resources with the least negative impact on society, lifestyle, and environment in order to be the paving way for sustainable tourism development in the future.

Doonlamphan Non-hunting Area is a tourist destination where various groups of tourists have visited for leisure and excursions. There are activities such as trekking, studying nature trails, and listening to supportive information from the staff. However, one of the encountered problems was the poor supervision of the staff and the behavior of some tourists that can cause a negative effect on the ecosystem. This definitely contrasts with the definition of sustainable tourism from the Globe'90 Conference (1990) in Canada. In addition to the meeting that defined sustainable tourism as the needs of today's tourists and local owners, sustainable tourism must also be addressed as the resources of future generations and should also be protected and preserved. Although many organizations have been trying to find ways to promote sustainable tourism in the dimension of sustainable conservation, the Doonlamphan Non-hunting Area has deteriorated. Meanwhile, the research results have not

been applied in concrete practice to solve the problem systematically. Therefore, it is imperative for tourism management planning with cooperation from various sectors including local government organizations, state enterprises, and communities as they both considered structures with legal powers and duties to directly carry out tourism and also other related missions with the implementation of the missions directly influenced local tourism operations.

The study of "Community Participation in Sustainable Tourism at Doonlamphan Non-Hunting Area, Na Chueak district, Maha Sarakham province" aimed to gain information leading to sustainable development planning, created the same concept in area development responding to local and national strategies with an emphasis on participatory research. Therefore, in every step, the community's participation was emphasized to achieve further learning and self-reliance.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To study the level of participation of the community towards sustainable tourism in the non-hunting area Doonlamphan Non-Hunting Area, Na Chueak district, Maha Sarakham province
2. To analyze the ways to promote community participation in sustainable tourism in the Doonlamphan Non-Hunting Area, Na Chueak district, Maha Sarakham province

METHODOLOGY

The study of "Community participation in sustainable tourism in the Doonlamphan Non-Hunting Area, Na Chueak District, Maha Sarakham Province" is a mixed research method consisting of quantitative research method, which used questionnaires in conducting research. The qualitative research method used semi-structured interviews and group discussions to collect data for conducting research.

1. Population used in this research, both quantitative and qualitative including the people living in the area of Doonlamphan forest without hunting, and key informants including community leaders, representatives from government agencies, local government organizations, and officials in the area without hunting of wild animals in Doonlamphan forest.
2. Samples used in the research were the sample groups of the quantitative research and the qualitative research as follows.

2.1 Samples of quantitative research were local people chosen from the people who live in the area around the Doonlamphan Non-hunting Area. According to the exact rate of population was not known; therefore, the sample size was calculated by using the formula of Cochran (1997). The calculated sample size was 384.16 people. Thus, in this research, the sample size for the quantitative study was 400 people.

2.2 Key contributors for qualitative research were local people and community leaders, representatives from government agencies, local government organizations, and ten Doonlamphan Non-hunting Area officials by using Semi-structured Interview and focus group.

3. The research tools were according to quantitative and qualitative research methods. The instrument used in this research was a questionnaire and interview form used in the qualitative study.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 General information of respondents was analyzed by using descriptive statistics by finding the frequency and percentage.

4.2 Data analysis on the level of community participation in sustainable tourism development used descriptive statistical methods by finding Mean and Standard Deviation.

4.3 Hypothesis testing on the difference of the mean between the two groups of variables used the Independent Sample t-test (Boonchom Srisa - ard, 2002, p.109), and the hypothesis test on the difference of mean among the three or more variables was analyzed by one-way analysis of variance using F-test (One Way Analysis of Variance). Meanwhile, a pair of mean scores were compared by Sheffe's method (Boonchom Srisa - ard, 2002, p.115).

4.4 Qualitative data were collected from semi-structured interviews and group discussions based on the content

analysis (Dudovskiy, 2018).

RESULTS

Quantitative research results

1. General information of respondents was as follows. Most of the respondents were female (74.00%), and most of them were under 20 years old (56.00%). Most occupations were students (58.00%). Meanwhile, most of the average monthly income was less than 10,000 baht (78.00%). They had a primary education (38.00%), and the length of time they lived in the community was about 11-15 years (42.00%).
2. Community participation in sustainable tourism development of the Doonlamphan Non-Hunting Area, Na Chueak district, Maha Sarakham province,

Table 1 shows the community participation in sustainable tourism development Of the Doonlamphan Non-Hunting Area, Na Chueak district, Maha Sarakham province in overall aspects.

The Community Participation	\bar{x}	S.D.	Level of Participation
1. Participation in finding problems and root causes	2.30	0.95	Low
2. Participation in planning	2.06	0.93	Low
3. Participation in operations	2.26	0.86	Low
4. Participation in receiving benefits	2.01	0.91	Low
5. Participation in monitoring and evaluation	2.16	1.01	Low
Total	2.16	0.87	Low

As shown in Table 1, people in the communities living in the area around the Doonlamphan Non-Hunting Area participated in the development of sustainable tourism in overall aspects at a low level. (\bar{x} = 2.16) When considering each aspect, it was found that the participation level was at a low level in all aspects. The findings in descending order were sorted as follows: Participation in finding problems and root causes (\bar{x} = 2.30), Participation in operations (\bar{x} = 2.26), Participation in monitoring and evaluation (\bar{x} = 2.16), Planning participation (\bar{x} = 2.06), and Participation in receiving benefits (\bar{x} = 2.01).

3. Results of hypothesis testing

Table 2 summarizes the results of the comparison of community participation in sustainable tourism management in the Doonlamphan Non-Hunting Zone, classified by sex, age, occupation, education level, average monthly income, and length of stay in the community.

The Community Participation	Personal status					
	Gender	Age	Occupation	Educational Level	Monthly Income	Duration of Habitation
1. Participation in finding problems and root causes	√	√	√	√	√	√
2. Participation in planning	-	√	√	√	√	√
3. Participation in operations	-	√	√	√	√	√
4. Participation in receiving benefits	-	√	√	√	√	√
5. Participation in monitoring and evaluation	-	√	√	√	√	√
Total	-	√	√	√	√	√

Note √ = The difference was statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

- = no different

4. The results of the qualitative data analysis

1. Knowledge and understanding about sustainable tourism, it was found that people in the communities surrounding the Doonlamphan Non-Hunting Area understood sustainable tourism as tourism that emphasizes the

value and uniqueness of each attraction. It is tourism that is responsible for tourism resources and the environment. The interviews also showed that, partly because of educational limitations and the lack of tourism information, people in the community still lack a lot of knowledge and understanding about sustainable tourism.

2. Participation in finding problems and root causes for sustainable tourism management in the Doonlamphan Non-Hunting Area, it was found that people in the community lowly involved in finding problems and root causes in a low manner. There was very little to the management of sustainable tourism in the Doonlamphan Non-hunting Area because since it was announced as a non-hunting area, the Doonlamphan forest where was supervised by officials in the Doonlamphan Forest Hunting Area, Villagers then reduced their roles instantaneously. There was some eye-catching help from villagers, whereas, in the non-hunting area, the Doonlamphan party did not request any cooperation with the surrounding people.

3. Participation in planning for sustainable tourism management in the Doonlamphan Non-hunting Area, the result has also shown that people in the community had low involvement in planning sustainable tourism management in the Doonlamphan Non-hunting Area as well. Since it was declared a non-hunting area, the authorities of the Doonlamphan Non-Hunting Area also worked independently according to the agency's regulations; meanwhile, the surrounding community did not have any co-planning role.

4. Participation in the implementation of sustainable tourism management in the Doonlamphan Non-Hunting Area, the result was found that people lack community participation in implementing sustainable tourism management in the Doonlamphan Non-Hunting Area due to the lack of request of participation from the authorities additionally the lack of publicity. However, people realized that it was the authority of the government sector; they were ready to cooperate if coordinated from agencies.

5. Participation in receiving benefits for sustainable tourism management in the Doonlamphan Non-Hunting Area, the result indicated that although people did not gain benefit from sustainable tourism management in the Doonlamphan Non-Hunting Area, villagers were aware and respectful of the laws of the Doonlamphan Non-Hunting Area under the Wildlife Conservation and Protection Act.

6. Participation in the monitoring and evaluation of sustainable tourism management in the Doonlamphan Non-Hunting Area, it was found that the people of the community did not participate in the monitoring and evaluation of sustainable tourism management. In which all of the ten interviewees reported consistent information that due to the non-involvement of operational or planning role from the beginning; therefore, there was no role in the monitoring and evaluation of tourism management in the Doonlamphan Non-Hunting Zone either.

7. Guidelines for promoting community participation in sustainable tourism management in the Doonlamphan Non-Hunting Area, according to the group discussions, recommendations were made to promote the participation of the community towards sustainable tourism management in the Doonlamphan Non-Hunting Area which would be applied in policy as follows.

7.1 The Doonlamphan Non-Hunting Area authorities should provide opportunities for people in the community to participate in tourism management in the Doonlamphan Non-Hunting Area.

7.2 Agencies, officers, and communities hold a meeting to discuss together to organize the tourism management in the Doonlamphan Non-hunting zone.

7.3 People in the community have opportunities and take part in tourism, or participate in being as a local tour guide in the Doonlamphan Non-Hunting Area.

7.4 Officials should cooperate with villagers in conservation, help each other to watch and protect the environment in the forest of the non-hunting area, Doonlamphan to be sustainable.

7.5 Staff should organize public relations activities and projects, and provide opportunities for people in the community to take part in such activities of the Doonlamphan Non-Hunting Area.

DISCUSSION

According to the research objectives of the study of community participation towards sustainable tourism in the Doonlamphan Non-Hunting Area, Na Chueak District, Maha Sarakham Province, he points for discussion

according to the research objectives are as follows.

1. The results of the study on the level of community participation towards sustainable tourism in the Dunlampan Non-Hunting Area, Na Chueak District, Maha Sarakham Province

People in the community who live in the area around the Doonlamphan Non-hunting Area contributed to the community in the development of sustainable tourism of the Doonlamphan Non-hunting Area, Na Chueak district, Maha Sarakham province in overall aspects at a low level. In accordance with the study of Nantana Waennak et al., (2008) studied the participation of the community in the management of local attractions, the case study of Ayutthaya Historical Park. It was found that the community participation in the management of the Ayutthaya Historical Park, in overall aspects, was at a very low level. The management of the Ayutthaya Historical Park was characterized by a top-down order of management that caused the community non-involvement in the management of the attraction. Meanwhile, the government did not take into account the profit from the tourists' trips and visiting additionally the government agency acted as a caretaker, and was mainly responsible for the maintenance as the policy of the area conservation to preserve the attraction as a national treasure. Narong Khururak et al., (2010) studied the community participation in conservation efforts of the tourism management of Dinosaur Park of People in Non Buri sub-district, Sahatsakhan district, Kalasin province. The results of the research were as follows: the level of participation of people in the Non Buri sub-district, Sahatsakhan district, Kalasin province, the overall management of dinosaur park tourism was also at a low level. In addition, Sud Thanom Tancharoen (2016) found that if the mean of participation in the development process to create jobs and income for the community was at a low average, It showed that most community members still felt that the benefits which villagers had received from tourism in the area were not as fair as they should have been. Thus, they should participate in more areas of action.

2. Guidelines for promoting community participation in sustainable tourism in the Doonlamphan Non-hunting Area, Na Chueak district, Maha Sarakham province

Barriers and ways to promote participation in sustainable tourism management of the Doonlamphan Non-hunting Area were the following: communities did not participate in various fields about the management of tourism in the Doonlamphan Non-hunting Area, whereas communities should be acknowledged and participated in expressing needs, initiatives, presenting opinions, attending meetings, providing information, analyzing, making decisions and developing processes, conducting tourism-related to benefit the local area. In order to distribute incomes, enhance the quality of life, and take part in the management of local resources as well, building a knowledge base in various fields for the community should be first applied. (Aris Rasejanon, 2009; Cohen and Uphoff, 1997). Pathomkanjana (2014) studied the guidelines for promoting cultural tourism with the participation of the Bang Luang market community and found that there should be the development of volunteer tourism personnel in the development of community tourism, and also the support from the sub-district or local administrative organization owing to providing assistance, coordinating and providing information to each other to form a network. According to the research of Sudthanom Tancharoen (2015, 2016), it was found that the learning of communities and local government organizations on sustainable tourism, arts, culture, and environmental conservation of ongoing joint activities could help increase the potential for sustainable community-based tourism management. That is to say, they could be self-reliant through the joint management of the community members.

It can be seen that in the management of sustainable tourism, government agencies must have a management plan following the capacity of all sectors, including the problem of building cooperation with people in the area, taking into account the utilization and conservation of natural resources and the environment as Boonlert Jittungwattana, and Pensiri Srikampha. (2014, page 21) described the six key components of sustainable tourism development: 1) Tourism Resource Development 2) Elements of Tourism Marketing Development 3) Elements of tourism business development, 4) Elements of environmental development in tourist attractions, 5) Elements of development of tourism participation, and 6) Elements of development of tourism consciousness of which have been involved in all sectors and driven together simultaneously, as shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2: Key components of sustainable tourism development

Source: Boonlert Jittungwattana, and Pensiri Srikampha (2014, page 21)

If there are integrations and participation in tourism management, these will probably be able to drive the development of tourism that is sustainable to the economy, society, culture, and environment in the future.

Suggestions for applying the research results

1. Government agencies would apply the research results to their tourism development policy.
2. To promote the participation of local communities in the management of sustainable tourism in the district within the area of the Doonlamphan Non-hunting Area, Na Chueak district, Maha Sarakham province for more efficiency.
3. The research results can be used to solve problems, obstacles, and impacts in sustainable tourism management of the Doonlamphan Non-hunting Area to contribute to the sustainable development and conservation of natural resources and forests.
4. Dissemination of knowledge on sustainable tourism management which can be a guideline for the economic development of the community, and also a support of the income-generating from tourism.

Suggestions for further research

Further research on different issues should be conducted, and some studies have not been done, for example, A Study of the Tourism Management Potential of the Doonlamphan Non-Hunting Area, or A study of satisfaction and traveler opinions or repeat tourism of tourists, etc.

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