FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH TOURISM MANAGEMENT: A CASE OF CULTURAL TOURISM

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Abstract- This paper aimed to identify factors associated with the tourism management, problems and obstacles, and visitors' requirements, in order to find out appropriate directions for promotional activities of the cultural tourism. The case study was a cultural study of many districts of Uttraradit Province. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods to collect the data. The findings revealed places of significance in the historical, artistic and cultural dimensions, and the connection with the local way, indicating the tourism development capacity of the study area. The study also reported that most tourism and service attributes received high significance in the visitors' requirements. Lastly, some recommendations of promotional activities for the cultural tourism of the place were also given.

Index Terms- Cultural Tourism, Factors, Management, Satisfaction

I. INTRODUCTION

The Thai tourism industry during the previous years has been very critical to the Thai economy. The industry shares an average GDP percentage rate of over 6.3 to the national economy and the proportion of 50 percentages of the whole value of export of service. This has generated the annual receipts of over 470,625 million Baht. Furthermore, the tourism industry has a linkage with other service industries for instance accommodation, restaurants and transportation (Fiscal Policy Office, 2009). However, recently the national economic trouble has lessened the positive atmosphere of the industry. Many travel entrepreneurs are affected. Some companies closed down; many others have been trying to control their costs that have increased, while the return has been reducing. The policy to boost the national tourism have been tried for instance an exemption of tourist VISA fee and entrance fee to national parks and historical parks, and loan extension for tourism entrepreneurs (Boosting tourism for national economy, 2009). Rethinking about the national marketing plan is therefore necessary, whereas the tourism sector including associated service sector are required to adjust in order to stabilize the financial and capital circulation in the economy. It can be seen that the tourism market targeting plan at present has paid more attention to Thai or domestic, expatriate and niche markets for example agro- tourism, health tourism, adventure tourism and cultural tourism segments. Usually 80 percentages of the whole revenue from tourism has mostly benefited big tourism investors and foreign- owned companies that sell mass tourism packages. Mass tourism has been criticized as one of destructive forms of tourism to the environment, ecological system and social fabrics. Therefore alternative tourism, to name including adventure and cultural tourism should be more sustainable.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Uttraradit is a province located in the lower north of Thailand. The historical document describes it used to be a frontier town for the Ayutthaya Kingdom which was the capital during Ayutthaya period. Some ancient artifacts were discovered there, and they had been identified to belong to the pre- history, Ayutthaya period and Thonburi period. Uttraradit was formerly a sub- district named Bang Pho Tha It that was administered under Phi Chai Town. Later, Uttraradit was changed to be the principle town replacing Phi Chai Town due to its growth. Lab Lae is one of the districts of Uttraradit Province located on the southern part of the province. Geographically the town is located on the mountain range with rich natural resources. There is much of the eastern Lanna or Chiang Saen Kingdom cultural influences for example the language and dialect. Because of the town's richness in the cultural and natural assets, it becomes the strategic area of the province's tourism. The popular pattern of tourism and related service is 'homestay', the concept in which visitors or tourists have opportunity to stay with local hosts as to live like a local for cultural learning benefit (Cultural Tourism, 2009).

Fai Luang is one of the sub- districts in Lab Lae District considered for its high capacity for cultural tourism development. Its outstanding characters include local friendliness, sufficient living, natural richness, rice fields, vegetable and fruit plantations, woven, textile and other locally sourced and produced products. These characters contribute to the strong identity of the town.

In this regards, this paper aimed to identify different factors in order to discover appropriate directions for

promotional activities of the cultural tourism of this sub- district.

III. DETAILS EXPERIMENTAL

3.1. Research Methodology

The aim of this paper was to identify different factors including the tourism management, problems and obstacles, and visitors' requirements, in order to find out appropriate directions for promotional activities of the cultural tourism, using the case study of Fai Luang Sub- district in Lab Lae District, Uttraradit Province. The study applied both qualitative and quantitative methods. The data collection utilized questionnaire, interview, focus group and observation. The sampling technique for the quantitative method was convenience sampling, to acquire the requirements of visitors who visited the tourist attractions in Fai Luang Sub- district. To analyze the qualitative data collected from the interviews and focus group interview, the study employed SWOT analysis in order to find out appropriate directions for promotional activities for the cultural tourism of the area of study. After that, the analyzed data was discussed by using the related theories and previous studies. The final step was to categorize data sets. The quantitative data analysis used descriptive statistics.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Fai Luang Sub- district in Lab Lae District was named to represent the big weir built under the government project as the town's reservoir for local agricultural uses. The people of Fai Luang are characterized by their root influenced by the culture of Lanna or Chiang Saen Kingdom, which can be seen from their living style, house settlement, language and agricultural culture. In terms of tourism capacity, the area is plenty of natural and man- made resources found to have their capacity in tourism development. Different sites were evaluated for their significance in different dimensions, and the finding reported the seven sites with their unique significance and connection with the local way.

4.1. Fai Luang Weir

(1) Historical significance

It is the first weir of Thailand built under the initiative of King Rama 5th and presided over by King Rama 5th.

(2) Artistic significance

The weir is the model for other weirs in Thailand.

(3) Cultural significance

The place is also used for social function, for community meeting.

(4) Connection with local way

The weir is meaningful and useful for the community as most of people work in the agricultural sector.

4.2. Chao Pho Fah Harm Kumarn Monument

(1) Historical significance

Chao Pho Fah Harm Kumarn was the first governor of Lab Lae.

(2) Artistic significance

It is the local monument.

(3) Cultural significance

The annual ceremony is held to worship the former governor.

(4) Connection with local way

The place collects the heart of the community people and the worship ceremony is held every year.

4.3. The golden teakwood Viharn at Wat Don Sak Temple

(1) Historical significance

The whole Viharn building was built of the whole body of the golden teak tree that grew and died in the temple area. The Viharn was built across the teak tree stump on the hill; this became the name 'Don Sak' (Don means hill; Sak means teakwood or teak tree). Another historical significance regards the teak door of the Viharn that was built and crafted by the artisans before the Ayutthaya period.

(2) Artistic significance

The motif and style of the teak door represents the Burmese art and delicate fine arts.

(3) Cultural significance

The place was registered as the national ancient monument by the Fine Arts Department.

(4) Connection with local way

The Viharnis used as the place for Buddhist religious rituals. The teak door of the Viharn also presents the pride of the community.

4.4. HorPhra TraiKlang Nam (The Tripitaka Hall in the middle of the canal)

(1) Historical significance

The hall was built 60 years ago.

(2) Artistic significance

It is the ancient hall built by the ancient artisans. It is used for collecting the Buddhist teaching texts, posted in the middle of the canal as to prevent damage from termites to the Buddhist teaching texts.

(3) Cultural significance

The hall is also used for preserving the local books written in Lanna and made of palm leaves.

(4) Connection with local way

The ashes of the community ancestors were kept here, in terra cotta containers.

4.5. Wat ChediKiri Viharn Temple

(1) Historical significance

The temple was built by the demand of Chao Fah Harm Kumarn for depositing the relics of the Lord Buddha. The Chedi of the temple is the first Chedi of Lab Lae District.

(2) Cultural significance

The temple was registered as the national ancient monument by the Fine Arts Department.

4.6. The Local Museum at Wat Mon Arak Temple

(1) Historical significance

The ancient artifacts collected unearthed include pieces of terra cotta, bronze axes, polished stone axes, stone disc- shaped weapon and stone bracelets. The preliminary assumption is that this archeological site had existed during the pre- history with the age between 1,200- 2,000 years.

(2) Artistic significance

The museum displays a collection of the precious ancient artifacts.

(3) Cultural significance

The collections represent ancient cultures of the place.

(4) Connection with local way

The temple area is the viewpoint from which the landscape of Lab Lae District and the neighboring towns can be visualized.

4.7. The Local Museum at Wat Tong Lab Lae Temple

(1) Historical significance

The collections displayed in the museum have their history in relation with the community folks as most of them were donated by the community people.

(2) Artistic significance

The museum displays local arts and local ancient objects.

(3) Cultural significance

The museum also is the center of collecting the community's culture presented through display of objects and interpretation for next generations.

(4) Connection with local way

The museum also plays a role of the learning center for youth who are interested in the history of the community.

Moreover, the demographic findings of the quantitative study reported female as the majority of the respondents with the age between 20- 30 years old, Bachelor Degree graduated and students, with an average income per month lower than 10,000 Baht. Most are the local visitors who live in Uttraradit Province. The findings revealed study excursion as the main purpose of visiting the town, and the frequency of visitation to the sub- district was 1- 2 times per year. The finding of visitors' requirement evaluation on the tourism and related factors was shown in **Table 1- 3**. The finding pointed out that the infrastructure was the factor given significance at a high level in all attributes for instance the toilet facility. The requirements for activities in the tourist attractions in the attributes of cooking participation and weaving were at a high level of significance. Lastly, safety factor was also reported with a high level of significance in the attribute of health safety.

From the visitors' requirement evaluation on the tourism and related factors, some directions for tourism promotion and development for the cultural tourism of Fai Luang Sub- district.

(1) *Alliances:* cooperation across different organizations is required for the tourism promotion and development of Fai Luang Sub- district for more efficient management and benefits of all stakeholders. Cooperating in initiating tourism programs and involving related local organizations and people to work as a team, promoting environmentally-friendly tourism and services, and trainings to be provided for local people should be some of the recommendations to establish the foundation of sustainable tourism development.

(2) Individualized marketing: this marketing technique is appropriate for small market. To promote tourism to smaller or niche markets, it requires special and customized travel content and information, which is more persuasive than the general one. Niche tourism market seeks for more authentic travel experiences that allow them to be immersed in local atmosphere and with local people. Moreover, words of mouth as the viral marketing technique and travel information directly informed by travel entrepreneurs can also be useful to motivate cultural tourists and visitors to take a visit or repeat visit.

(3) Cultural tour program design: it is meaningful if cultural tourism programs and routes are designed and managed by local people in the community. Local wisdoms and other cultural fabrics will be representing the local context. After that, example programs and routes should be sent to associated organizations for public relation and promotion.

The main findings could be used for the identification of the cultural tourism capacity of Fai Luang Sub-

district and its tourism promotion. The finding revealed that the area possessed high level of capacity characterized by its different cultural and historical places of significance: Fai Luang Weir, Chao Fah Harm Kumarn Monument, the golden teakwood Viharn at Wat Don Sak Temple, Hor Phra Trai Klang Nam (The Tripitaka Hall in the middle of the canal), Wat Chedi Kiri Viharn Temple, the Local Museum at Wat Mon Arak Temple, and the Local Museum at Wat Tong Lab Lae Temple. One of the distinguished aspects of the community regards the spiritual value and connection between the places and the community. These physical sites are meaningful as they represent the community identity and its inherited cultural fabrics. Some outstanding intangible cultural assets include rituals or festivals that associate with Buddhism and ancestral for example Kang Buya representing the community merit making, Tan Salak Salom Festival arranged to make merit for their ancestors and next life, Tree Ordination Ceremony arranged as a tool to protect trees and foster the community's sense of natural protection.

Another cultural attribute for attracting visitors is local sourced and produced products, which can be made with the local references, for instance bloom, local foods, music instruments and fruits. This coincided with the study of Mbaiwa and Sakuze (2010) explaining that local products could be made in variety and association with local way of life. Fai Luang has a diversity of cultural wisdoms through both tangible and intangible assets that can be developed as cultural elements in the cultural tourism type to attract more visitors. This agreed with the study of Weerawat Damchoo et al. (2008) concluding that each community had its own local wisdoms and capacity for further development, and those could be utilized while maximizing and empowering its people for the sustainable way of management.

The visitors' requirements for tourism products, service and facilities reported a high level of significance in most of the attributes. The primarily significant attributes include, for instance, toilet facility, food and drink service and local restaurant service. The most sought experiences of the visitors are cooking local foods and weaving activities, whereas the most concerned safety issue is health safety. Lastly, high significance in terms of tourism marketing concerns its cultural tourism image, implying that the area of study needs to create a tourism image that agrees with their cultural significance and value.

Building alliance and individualized marketing techniques are appropriate for the tourism promotion to be suggested for the area, as these are appropriate with community- based tourism. This agreed with the finding of the community- based tourism study by Soraya Homcheun (2010), concluding that building alliances or network among communities for instance Liled in Surat Thani Province and Mae Kampong in Chiang Mai Province, was the sustainable way to safeguarding social and cultural fabrics of communities. Moreover, due to a small number of visitors to the area, its young age in tourism and a shortage of development supports from associated organizations, the area should apply individualized marketing to promote the tourism. Customization of travel content and information and distribution of picture content can be done with the viral or words of mouth marketing technique to cater to the niche market. This could be supported by the study of William Feighery (2010) describing that collecting beautiful travel pictures is a post- modern behavior. Even though it is reflecting the inauthentic culture in a sense, this could still be useful for the promotion. Therefore, the technique should be maximized with impressive picture collections and displays in various forms, both print- out and digitalized.

In regards to public relation and promotional activities for the community's cultural tour programs, local people should get involved in managing the community tourism, whereas the community center such as temples can be the welcoming point as well as the place where some tourism activities can be carried out and local cultural performances can be held. This is an orientation provided for visitors to be introduced about the community.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study were also integrated with the teaching and learning activity. The students had an opportunity to do and learn about cultural tourism with the community. This experience contributed to the precious social and learning skills of the lecturer and the students.

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