THE EXAMINATION OF AN INTEGRATION OF SOCIAL CAPITALS AND APPROACH OF TOURISM PROMOTION FOR THE CREATIVE COMMUNITY

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Abstract- The aim of this study was to examine an integration of social capitals and approach of tourism promotion for the creative community- based tourism of the Tai Phuan Ethnic Community in Pak Plee District, Nakorn Nayok Province. The four Tai Phuan villages were selected as the study areas. The study applied qualitative approach including documentary research, the constructivism analysis for data interpretation, interviews, focus group, fieldworks, and participant and non-participant observation. The findings narrated the potentiality of the four Tai Phuan villages for creative community- based tourism development, characterized by their unique cultural identities as the social capital components. Suggestions of creative community- based tourism promotional activities for the villages were delivered in this paper in response to both domestic and international tourism markets.

Index Terms- Creative Community- Based Tourism, Community, Social Capital, Cultural Identity

I. INTRODUCTION

Media in the globalization era has played a remarkable role in shaping the world population's consumption motivation and behavior. In particular, tourism is one of the industries in which the market is simply stimulated by media that has gradually been developed in several forms and channels. Also, media has shaped the supply side of tourism industry especially in terms of market and product competition. As a result, there have been new and alternative forms of tourism and tourism activities. Creative Community- Based Tourism (C- CBT) is an example of alternative tourism that has been promoted and supported by the Thai Government during the past few years. This form of tourism is viewed as the tourism that conserves natural resources and safeguards social and cultural assets of the nation, as it is initiated from the locals. By its nature, community- based tourism promotes local involvement and engagement in the process of tourism development and management, resulting in knowledge learning and sharing among the locals, which is to assure sustainable growth as a goal of sustainable development. Social capital is very critical in creative community- based tourism development. The term social capital was defined varying by different social contexts. The term was defined in this paper, based on the review of related literature, as the result instigated from people networking to cooperate in activities for public benefits and social empowerment; as well the process strengthens people and promotes social sharing. The components of social capital are categorized into human capital, institutional capital, and intellectual and cultural capital (Pattanathai Foundation, 2003, p. 1-2). Human capital refers to human resources qualified by their knowledge, skills and intellectuals, ethics, disciplines, responsibility, positive attitude at work and concern of public interests or social benefits. Institutional capital is fabricated by family institution, educational institution, religion institution, political institution and other forms of organizational establishment, for instance private organizations, community organizations, professional organizations and alike. Intellectual and cultural capital covers value system, cultural and wisdoms in the forms of tangible and intangible cultural assets.

Tai Phuan is an ethnic group of people migrating long time ago from Chiang Khuang or the high plateau of Laos. They have settled for more than 200 years in Pak Plee District, Nakorn Nayok Province. Tai Phuan has their own language and unique traditions, and this they values their language and identity. The Tai Phuan people are Buddhist, and their personalities are characterized by their peaceful living, kindness, love of freedom, hard-working, strong kinship bonds, and value of respect for elders. Their cultural values and identities for instance teachings, folktales, beliefs, traditions, rituals, arts and wisdoms, have been transferred from generation to generation. It is thereafter important that there should be concern of ethnic cultural safeguarding and preservation. This paper aimed to examine an integration of social capitals and approach of tourism promotion for the creative community- based tourism of the Tai Phuan Ethnic Community in Pak Plee District, Nakorn Nayok Province.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Creative Tourism

Creative tourism is a new concept created by Crispin Raymond and Greg Richards. The concept is defined as forms of tourism activities that allow visitors to discover and develop their creativity in an environment that fosters visitors' learning of society

and culture of the visited place (Suddaen Wisutthilak et al., 2011, p. 37). Activities usually associate with backstage scenes of local simply way of living for instance learning cooking and making handicrafts, and experiencing how to live like a local. These activities aim to give visitors hand-on experiences in closer interaction with the local so that visitors and local learn each other. Creative tourism in the viewpoint of many scholars is therefore initiated by use of unique social and cultural assets and identities of particular communities, and it endorses creativity value to be gained from host- guest interaction process, cultural conversations, and from local engagement in cultural activities. By this way, in the host side, tourism becomes a precious tool that enriches cultural diversity values, upholds awareness of local people about their cultural pride and empowers them for further capability development. In the guest or visitor side, creative tourism can be a moment of truth that ignites their hidden creativity and contributes to further application in personal living.

2.2. Community- Based Tourism (CBT)

Community- based tourism (CBT) can be thought as the oldest form of tourism whose concept was derived from eco- tourism, the tourism that had been driven to arise by the sustainable tourism development trend. CBT by its definition is the tourism of community. This means that tourism that involves communities initiating, developing and managing their own tourism industry within their social system and mechanism with the primary goal to recovering and safeguarding their art and cultural identities, and with fair benefits. However, definitions of CBT are also represented under various dimensions, for instance under the conceptual and operational dimensions. Photjana Suansri (1997, p. 14) defined CBT as the tourism that concerned sustainability of environment, society and culture, and whose directions were determined by people who live in that community; by this definition, CBT emphasizes on roles of community people who have rights in managing and controlling tourism activities in ways that promote visitors' learning. Sin Sarobon et al.
(2004) gave an operational definition of CBT. It is the alternative way of tourism management in which community gets involved in directing the tourism based on the idea that every local is the owner of resources and the stakeholder in the tourism system; by this, natural, historical, cultural resources, traditions, way of living, local wisdoms and local productions of community are the capitals or factors to be appropriately managed for tourism with concern of carrying capacity, whereas knowledge and skills of local people should be developed in order that they can play role confidently in CBT operations ranging from making decision, planning, implementing and evaluating of lessons learned for sustainable benefits to the community and next generations. CBT comprises 4 components including natural and cultural resources, local organizations, management and learning. Achievement of sustainable CBT requires balance management of these components.

2.3. Creative Community- Based Tourism (C-CBT)

Creative community- based tourism or C-CBT is an integrated concept of creative tourism and community- based tourism, in search of tourism value chain and differentiation through community mechanism and its social and cultural fabrics. C- CBT is represented by community participation and engagement in the management of its tourist attractions and fair sharing of benefits, which contribute to community strengths. C-CBT requires active participation of visitors who will interact with local hosts in authentic or real cultural exchanging and learning situations. Positive outcomes induced by the C-CBT include conservation awareness, impressiveness of tourism experiences, fair income distribution, learning exchange experience and balanced development of social, economic and environmental capitals.

III.DETAILS EXPERIMENTAL

3.1. Research Methodology

The study area of this paper was Tai Phuan Ethnic group who lived in Pak Plee District located on the east side of Nakorn Nayok Province. Pak Plee consists of 7 sub- districts which are inhabited by various ethnic groups of people for instance Thai- Laos, Thai- Tai Phuan, and Thai- Chinese groups. The study area was selected for the study as it strongly represented congregated society of Thai- Tai Phuan people with rich cultural conservation. The fieldwork particularly focused on Koh Wai Sub- district which comprised of 4 villages: Koh Wai, Ban Mai, Ban Wat Fang Klong and Wat Tha Daeng. The 4 villages are outstanding in terms of their strong networking and concrete cooperation. The study employed qualitative approach by utilizing the holistic process of documentary research and analyzing based on the constructivism concept for data interpretation. The primary data was collected from interviews with village heads, fieldworks, focus group, and participant observation and non- participant observation during the author's attendance of a pilot trip under the Tai Phuan History Study Project.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study were narrated by 3 types of capitals: human capital, institutional capital and intellectual and cultural capital.

4.1. Human Capital

As Buddhist, Tai Phuan people have simple and peaceful living. They are characterized by their generosity, freedom- loving, hard-working, positive attitude and strong kinship. The fieldwork discovered that Tai Phuan people were very friendly and helpful. Moreover, there are people considered to be the local scholars who have local wisdoms and special skills for instance Mrs. Bua Loi who is the scholar of Lam Phuan, the traditional art and literature of Phuan singing and dancing, and Mr. Sunan Jantha who is the scholar of Tai Phuan weaving. There is a list of 22 local scholars in different sciences collected by Pak Plee District authority.

4.2. Institutional Capital

Institutional capital is explained by collective group in which members hold common values, trust and moral traits in order to achieve tasks in social development and empowerment. Assembly and networking of people becomes an institutional capital as it drives communities to cohesion as a crucial path to growth. The finding unveiled that Tai Phuan Community had a group of committee who contacted and cooperated with the provincial or central committee, formulated rules and regulations, and made agreements to facilitate tourism management activities. Some examples include an agreement of homestay management implemented to maintain standard of homestay accommodation in accordance with the rules set; and managing fair benefits to be received from welcoming visitors. Furthermore, local participation in determining objectives of tourism, designing tourism activities, assigning primary and secondary responsible persons, is very outstanding. The finding reported that the community had been managed through networking of for instance the Tai Phuan women group, Tai Phuan weaving group, Tai Phuan youth group and Tai Phuan elder group.

The community has applied the concept of the three pillars comprising 'home', 'temple or Wat', and 'governmental service'; the concept that defines the meaning of community (i.e. village) through the integration of these three as the basic foundation of traditional community. 'Home' presents an assembly of people to live together with common values, traditions, respects to ancestors, prides and sense of belonging. This assembly is driven with the vision to safeguarding community identity and to developing community's cultural assets and its people. 'Temple or Wat' represents the center of the community members with common values and beliefs. The four villages including Koh Wai, Ban Mai, Ban Wat Fang Klong and Wat Tha Daeng have the village temple: Wat Fang Klong Temple, Wat Tha Daeng Temple, Wat Pathumwongsawas Temple and Wat Koh Wai Temple. These temples play significant role in fostering the members' harmonization. Wat Fang Klong Temple is the main temple where monthly community committee meetings are held for discussions in regard to tourism management issues, with presence of local members. 'Governmental service' is the unit coming in to play a role of facilitating and guiding local people for tourism management directions in ways that can generate and distributes fair benefits and incomes. The governmental service refers to the sub- district municipality authority which supports the community in terms of finance, and Nakorn Nayok Cultural Office which supports in the development of Tai Phuan Museum and additional living exhibitions. Tai Phuan Creative Community- Based Tourism is one of the provincial policies of Nakorn Nayok that aims to develop the province to be the 'smart province' and to promote cultural tourism by selecting Tai Phuan villages in Pak Plee to be its strategic areas.

With the approach of the three pillars described above, Tai Phuan villages are empowered to cooperate, resulting in the community's strength, harmony, sense of belonging and pride of its culture and traditions.

4.3. Intellectual and Cultural Capital

The process of riding out intellectual and cultural capital of a community is by eliciting knowledge and wisdoms of individual members and scholars of the community for further development into concrete presence and utilities that can provoke local identity. The study discovered that Tai Phuan ethnic group possessed high culture and wisdoms, which could be studied through the following wisdoms:

(1) Tai Phuan Weaving: the wisdom has been transferred through generations. The wisdom is characterized by artistic, social and cultural significance through the product of textiles and steps of weaving. There are 2 types of textiles: plain fabrics and woven fabrics with patterns. The steps start from dying the fabric using the technique of Mudmee (Ikat in Indonesian). In order to conserve original motifs and patterns of Tai Phuan woven textile, a group of villagers assembled and worked on weaving with the dragon motif (Lai Phayanak) and the weaving wisdom can be exercised and transferred to next generation. Contemporary motifs and patterns have also been initiated to respond the modern time, for example the flower motif called 'Lai Dok Suphannika' which is the provincial flower of Nakorn Nayok.

(2) Lam Phuan Singing and Dancing: it is the wisdom of folk literature in the forms of singing and dancing of the Phuan, called Lam Phuan. Lam Phuan person writes lyrics, melodies and dance postures, thus presenting his or her literacy ability and artistic

performance. Playing Lam Phuan uses traditional music instrument of the Isan and Laos called 'Khene' or 'Khaen', a mouth organ of Lao origin whose pipes (made of bamboo) are connected with a small, hollowed- out hardwood reservoir into which air is blown, creating a sound similar to that of the violin. Lam Phuan narrates daily conversations of the locals in poetic form. It is normally performed in festivals. Another form is Lam Tad or parts of different folk songs that are re-made into one song, which has fun character.

(3) Ram Ton (Ton Dance): it is a folk entertainment especially for courting among young men and women. The singing and dancing uses 'Ton', which looks like a drum used in making rhythms. Lyrics for Ram Ton usually are short and repetitive, whereas dance postures are informal and vary by individuals' imagination.

(4) Baai Sri Su Kwan (Phuan blessing ceremony): the ceremony is held for welcoming back and blessing persons who arrive home. It is believed that 'Khwan' or invisible spirit lives in every individual. Losing 'Khwan' is thought to cause health or mental problems, and thus there is this ceremony held to call back the Khwan to the person. Khwan blessing ceremony is also held in various occasions for instance birth of new babies, ordination, marriage and rice planting and harvesting.

(5) Monthly festivals: monthly festivals are held to make merit for ancestors, to worship nature and spirits; the traditions mostly aim to show respect ancestors, to comfort the mind and to wish for well- being.

The analysis of the findings contributed to some suggestions for the creative community- based tourism promotion of the four villages of Koh Wai Sub-district, Pak Plee District, Nakorn Nayok Province. The suggestions were made for 2 types of tourism markets: Thai visitors as the primary market and international tourists as the secondary market.

For the primary market, Thai visitors, it was found that most of visitors were students who traveled in group with the purpose of learning the history, races and culture of Tai Phuan ethnic group, and the small number was independent Thai visitors. Tourism promotion may focus on motivating visitors to stay overnight in a provided homestay service, since this can open an opportunity for visitors to do some creative activities in order to encourage feeling of attachment and relationship between local hosts and visitors. Unique traditions of Tai Phuan for instance the Baai Sri Su Kwan or Phuan blessing ceremony can be added in the program. Value added can be offered in the program such as teaching visitors how to make a Baai Sri Tray by the locals in a friendly and simply daily environment, or teaching how to cook local dinner menus. Furthermore, there must be trainings for local people in Tai Phuan villages of standard services and hospitality for visitors' satisfaction and of impressive and interesting story-telling or interpretation for Tai Phuan history, culture, traditions and living. For tourism distribution channel management, the communities are recommended to cooperate with the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Culture for creative cultural learning initiative projects for schools and other interested organizations, as to promote or bring to public the Tai Phuan culture.

It was suggested that international tourists was targeted as the secondary market. Many previous studies found that western tourists loved to get closed and learn different culture of the east, for example Thai culture. Homestay has special characteristics that foster host and guest or visitor interaction, and thus is appealing for the creative community- based tourism promotion. Interesting handicraft making activities are exceptionally attractive for international market, for instance Tai Phuan Weaving. Small and simple weaving patterns can be created by the local weaving group for example scarf and napery. Then, the local people teach joining tourists how to weave them. Products created by tourists can represent their memory of moments in which they learn the local way and try making local handicrafts. Another activity is to learn cooking for Tai Phuan recipes, as a part of narrating Tai Phuan culture. An essential aspect of the tourism promotion for Tai Phuan creative community-based tourism is communication with international language. Cultural interpretation techniques can be done in various forms by non- oriented oral language. However, ability to have basic conversation and narration in English still is required. At a practical level, youth and local interpreters should be trained of English language. Cooperation with public organization for instance Ministry of Tourism and Sports and Tourism Authority of Thailand can be of assistance and support for further creative cultural learning promotions, which can be carried out by roadshow activity, digital English content publicity via social media sites such as Facebook.com and weblogs.

CONCLUSIONS

The globalization may be seen as an undeniable threat of the modern time. Communities with sufficient strengths and inherited power, with their cultural identities and ancestral heritage will be able to stay sustainably against this global force. Yet, while accepting that many traditional beliefs may disappear

by time, it is vital that community members unite and learn how to seriously safeguard their cultural heritage which is the social and cultural capitals. Creative community- based tourism is thus an alternative approach for local communities to conserve their traditional culture and identities whereas the members are empowered by getting involved and learning how to manage their own tourism system, like the Tai Phuan communities; allong this pathway, pride, sense of belonging and awareness of conservation are cultivated and transferred through generations, and the pillars of social, economic and environmental development remain balanced.

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