

Sustainable Tourism Industry Management in Nakhon Si Thammarat, Thailand

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Abstract. This article measures normative acceptance of sustainable tourism management and how situational factors differentially influence acceptance. Surveys of 30 informants from public and private sectors which related to tourism industry in Nakhon Si Thammarat, namely, Nakhon Si Thammarat Provincial of Tourism and Sport, Sub district Administration organization, Community Council, Volunteer for Community Development Group, Travel Agency, and enterprises. A purposive sampling technique was utilized. This study used in-depth interview and focus group to collected data for develop the tourism industry management by participants of sectors in Nakhon Si Thammarat Provincial such as educational institutions, religious institutions, government offices, private sectors, enterprises related to tourism industry, community leaders, and local people to create awareness for public scarification, to build a sense of unity and to bring good and sustainable management. This research found that there were five components in sustainable tourism management. Those were tourism resources, accessibility, amenities, safety and community participation.

Keywords: Tourism Industry Management, Sustainable Tourism Industry.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, Tourism is one of the most important sectors of the Thai economy with highest earning of foreign currencies [8]. Thailand has diversity in tourism resources; especially in geography, climates, biology and flora & fauna. These enable an increasing number of both Thai and international tourists to be able to choose to travel to many provinces of Thailand. Also, Thailand is reputed in cultural tourism. Thus, Thai government had continually promoted the development of tourism in various tourist destinations throughout the country. In order to sustain tourism, it is necessary for Thai government to address various issues arising from tourism's contribution to development in a comprehensive, systematic way. Issues of policy-making, planning, management and the participation of the private sector and other stakeholders must be addressed in terms of opportunities for action and possible constraints that need to be over come by concerted efforts [5]. Nakhon Si Thammarat in Thailand's rich historical, cultural and natural attractions has contributed to the development of mass tourism, which has had both positive and negative effects on development. Moreover, Nakhon Si Thammarat is a potential province of cultural tourism but it lacks of a concrete management for sustainable tourism plan. According to a study for national action plan for the tourism industry in the 11th National Economic and Social Development plans (2012-2016), the analysis for indentifying a suitable province tourism development. It is found that Nakhon Si Thammarat is the potential province that needs more aggressive managing. Thus, this research studies methodology, guidelines in developing management for sustainable tourism industry in Nakhon Si Thammarat in Thailand.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Definition of Tourism

Tourism is one of the most important and expanding sectors of the world economy. It is also a major source of foreign exchange earnings for many developing countries. Tourism, because it has become such a large industry, has many impacts which can be felt and seen worldwide and that effect all forms of life. The effects of these impacts can be advantageous but they can also cause many disadvantages and bring many

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problems with them. If tourism is managed properly (sustainable tourism), however, it can increase the benefits for or positive impacts on the social and natural environment of an area and reduce the negative effects significantly [5]. Tourism is defined by as follows:

“Tourism comprises the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited. Tourism is different from travel. In order for tourism to happen, there must be a displacement: an individual has to travel, using any type of means of transportation (he might even travel on foot: nowadays, it is often the case for poorer societies, and happens even in more developed ones, and concerns pilgrims, hikers). But all travel is not tourism” [6].

2.2. Sustainable Tourism

Sustainable tourism is a result of sustainable tourism development, a development a process. Sustainable tourism is not in itself a unique form of tourism as is for example adventure tourism, but a philosophy and a set of guidelines which can be used as a frame-work when developing all types of tourism, independent of scale and type, towards sustainability [7]. The concept of sustainable tourism was developed to achieve certain goals. These goals are mentioned in the various definitions of sustainable tourism. One well-known example is the definition of the WTO.

"Sustainable tourism development meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social, and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support system." [1].

In other words, sustainable tourism development is ecologically sustainable, viable as well as ethically and socially equitable. So, sustainable tourism integrates the natural, cultural and human environment. Therefore it respects the fragile environmental balance that characterises many tourism destinations, particularly in environmentally sensitive areas. Furthermore, it is characterised by a long term perspective. To evaluate if tourism development accomplishes these goals, a set of criteria has to be developed which serves as a frame to identify and structure the different aspects the goals of sustainable tourism are referring to [4].

3. Methodology

Applied research was used in this study to “find solutions to problems which arise in particular management situations” [9]. Groups of sample in this study composed of 30 informants from public and private sectors related to tourism industry in Nakhon Si Thammarat, namely, Nakhon Si Thammarat Provincial of Tourism and Sport, Sub district Administration organization, Community Council, Volunteer for Community Development Group, Travel Agency, and enterprises related to tourism industry, A purposive sampling technique was utilized. This study used in-depth interview and focus group to collected data.

4. Results

The study of the sustainable tourism industry management has been based on impact of tourism, relationship of the community with tourism, problems, and attitudes of tourists toward tourism activities in Nakhon Si Thammarat. The analysis results can be summarized as follows:

- Tourism resources. The investigation found that the resources have a capacity to be developed as sustainable ones, given the natural environment, beach’s beauty, local handicraft activities, and local way of life.
- Access to tourist attractions. It was determined that the communities have a management in terms of access to attraction sites. The location of the communities is easily accessible to tourists who can visit before going on to other places.
- Security in tourist attractions. It was found that security could be sustainably developed, given that there had been no road accidents, robberies, physical assaults, or natural disasters in Nakhon Si

Thammarat. There were police and community volunteers patrolling in the community and attraction sites.

- Tourist amenities in the attraction sites. It was found that to manage the tourism industry in Nakhon Si Thammarat into a sustainable tourism site, amenities needed improvement and development. An investigating of each site showed that parking space, especially for buses, was not sufficient. Toilets were both insufficient in numbers and unclean. Littering was rampant, despite enough trash bins causing eyesores in tourist attractions. Road signs to tourist attractions were clear, but signboards giving information about history or importance of places of interest were virtually non-existent.
- Community participation. It was found that for sustainable tourism management, community participation must be developed and promoted. It could be seen that the relationship between tourists and the communities is superficial as service users and service providers with benefits directly belonging to those involved in tourist-related businesses.

However, the finding revealed that community member wanted to participate in sustainable tourism management in the area because they believed that rising income would increase the quality of their lives and their communities.

5. Discussions

The tourism industry is one of many sectors which adopt the concept of sustainable management to determine the direction of its management. Tourism is an activity which directly affects tourism sources and communities because tourism mainly depends on natural resources and cultural heritage by using these resources to provide experience to tourists and to share them among each unit in the communities. As the community wants to manage itself to become a sustainable tourism source and wants to participate in many planning processes, first of all, the community needs guidance to proceed with the plan. They may start form cooperation with any related agencies in order to find all kinds of support in which the community is still lacking. The government should assist the community by using its power to solve difficulties. As with the findings of [3], which said that improved destination management by government and tourism industry may help to improve the sustainability of tourism. Also, [2] found that the tourism management is responsible for implementation of the tourist policy which would not damage natural resources.

6. Conclusion

This study focuses on the strategies for managing sustainable tourism industry in Nakhon Si Thammarat in Thailand. The results from this study, suggestion that tourism industry must be managed, partnership models created and common sustainability goals set up, although the industry consists of factors from different industries, factors of different types, and the planning is on different levels. The level of public participations and community participations provide an opportunity for tourism industry in Nakhon Si Thammarat to take part in any process in the development quality of life and tourism. Government bodies should give a support to fulfill what the tourism industry is still lacking or cannot do it by itself.

Suggestions: Guidelines to develop the sustainable tourism industry management in Nakhon Si Thammarat needs to consider the follow:

- The successful management of sustainable tourism must be undertaken in the form of community activities, administration must be transparent, running under acceptable rules, subjected to assessment.
- Find a means to distribute income and profit to the widest section of the people. Part of the income should be reserved to fund the development of the communities and for conservation of tourism resources. This will encourage people to take part in the tourism industry.
- Develop an appropriate form of sustainable tourism. This will be achieved by encouraging wide varieties of tourism related activities, finding characteristics of communities or developing the uniqueness of the communities.

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