

Community Participation for Sustainable Tourism in Heritage Site: A Case of Angkor, Siem Reap Province, Cambodia

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This research investigated the community participation for sustainable tourism of local residents who live within 4 communes around Angkor heritage site. The research aimed to examine the existing circumstance of community participation in sustainable tourism at Angkor, investigate the government measures for sustainable tourism development, the influence of stakeholders that promotes the community participation for sustainable tourism development at Angkor and propose guidelines for community participation in tourism management for sustainable tourism development at Angkor, Cambodia. The results showed that the existing community participation in tourism management for sustainable tourism development at Angkor, the government should encourage community participation in all kinds of tourism activities, more especially local people should be given opportunity to get job and directly income generating businesses. The Government and private sector also give attention to support the development in terms of physical construction area, improve the dimension of management by increasing other tourist facilities, and establish a participatory and environmental friendly plan and policy for sustainable development of tourism.

Keywords: Community participation, tourism management, sustainable tourism, Angkor, and Cambodia.

Over the decades, tourism has experienced continued growth and deepening diversification to become one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world. Modern tourism is closely linked to development and encompasses a growing number of new destinations. These dynamics have turned tourism into a key mechanism for socio-economic progress in developing countries as well as Cambodia, tourism can be used as a source to encourage the economic development. Tourism creates better living conditions to the local residents, provides tax revenues to governments, creates new tourism jobs and businesses, and keeps rural residents from moving to overcrowded cities (WTO, 2007).

The kingdom of Cambodia is situated in South-East Asia, which is one of the popular destinations in Asia. As this country is rich of cultural and natural resources, Cambodia's tourism industry continued to grow in 2007, with international visitor arrivals

reaching a total of 2,015,128; an 18.53% increase compared over 2006 figure of 1,700,041. Siem Reap Angkor arrivals had increased with 1,120,586 visitors, representing 55.61% an amazing 30.83% growth from last year, while Phnom Penh and other destinations had brought in a total of 894,542 visitors (44.39%)(MOT, 2008).

Tourism in Angkor Cambodia is very famous after it became a world heritage site in 1992. This heritage value of Angkor is a leading example in the tourism industry where environmentally and socially responsible tourism practices are taken to help protect the natural and cultural heritage. Therefore, Angkor has now become an international well-known tourism attraction. As a consequence, the increasing numbers of tourist and visitors as well as the number of establishments in Angkor are not only promoting benefits, but there are also some drawbacks, such as overuse of resources and poor

implementation of sustainable tourism. It is worthy to note that there has still been an unclear defined direction for community participation at local level in tourism development at Angkor and the surrounding communities. The local people are often reluctant to participate in many tourism activities. As a result, sustainable tourism development is crucial in practice and lacks visible achievement. To maintain the economic, environment, and socio-cultural benefits and eliminate the tourism drawbacks, local people participation in tourism development is the key tool to sustain the tourism resources and those benefits. A locally accepted approach of community participation in tourism management for sustainable tourism development is necessarily required.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN TOURISM

Cernea (1991) defines community participation as giving people more opportunities to participate affectively in developing activities and empowering people to mobilize their own capacities, be social actors rather than passive subject, manage their resources, make decisions, and control the activities that affect their lives. Participation is not a one way process, but a mutual learning and action experience for all concerned parties including professionals, academics, facilitators, government officials, entrepreneurs and local communities.

Chaisawat and Chamnina (2006) mentioned role of community in sustainable tourism development to bring local people to participate and get involve in tourism development. It is very useful to create public awareness to the tourism towards the development of an educational curriculum about the value of tourist exchange, their economic, social and cultural benefits and risks associated with tourism industry. These educational curriculums should be applied in the local primary and secondary community schools.

Community participation is the central to many tourism development strategies, both in the developed and the less developed world and constitutes one of the key objectives for the sustainable management approach of resources (Plamer and Lester, 2005). Stating the value of community people, community people can provide in-depth insight into heritage tourism and have a clearly practical dimensions

and indicators relating to community identity in the assessment, planning and management of this type of tourism (Esteban and Macarena, 2006). In addition, Roberta and Lee (2003) identified the importance in heritage tourism and mentioned that culture, which is often well preserved in rural areas, is a valuable resources to include, and that community-based partnerships such as cooperatives be very effective.

On the other hand, Li (2006) had completely different idea about community participation. Indeed it is an interesting finding itself and needs to further verification. Generally, Western scholars think that active local participation in decision-making is a precondition for benefits reaching communities. In developing countries, however, this paradigm is difficult to put into practice owing to various constraints. It is demonstrated that despite weak participation in decision-making processes, the local community can benefit sufficiently from tourism. It means that some scholar has given more preference in participation and some give less preference. But can conclude that the developing countries like Cambodia it is very important to have community participation in decision making in order to implement tourism plan successfully.

Cultural Heritage Tourism

Tourists are interest in people's value, attitudes and way of life as they are part of culture in addition to the more significant culture monuments. Culture tourism is a learning experience either about them or about other culture. Many people see culture tourism as a way of being involved in cross-cultural exchange that provide for contact with people from other places and cultures. For other, it is an opportunity for celebration and pilgrimage and finally for some it is an important intellectual and learning exercise entered on various dimensions of cultures (Provincial Investment Plan, 2007-2009).

Cultural heritage tourism is a major force in tourism planning and development. It requires multidisciplinary participation and involves a large number of specialists and actors to deal with the tension of preservation culture on one hand, on the other hand, using it as a mean of creating income. From the challenge Cambodia adopted an integrated professional approach to dealing with various dimensions of it cultural heritage. It requires well planned and manage research and demonstration.

Policy on Sustainable Tourism Development of Cambodia

The Cambodian Tourism Planning is based on the principle that tourism development must reduce poverty, ensure the equitable distribution of tourism revenues and accomplish this in a well plan and manageable manner. The plan is established based on sustainable tourism principles proposed by the United Nations as well as the World Tourism Organization (MOT, 2001). These principles include:

- a. Poverty alleviation and achieving gender and social equity within a social planning and development context.
- b. The protection of heritage in all at dimension (natural and cultural heritage as well as the traditions and value of the Cambodian people).
- c. Revenue capture by the local community.
- d. Effective monitoring to ensure that community plans as well as national policy objectives are met.
- e. Local involvement in both planning as well as economics activities is ensured. Capacity building and the creation of mechanisms for the support of small and medium enterprises will be explored whenever appropriate.
- f. Emphasis on formulating strategies that will create opportunities within the more disadvantaged area of the country.
- g. Ensure that development policies (including public work and transportation and bus and road network) are supportive of protecting and promoting the various attractions in the country.
- h. The needs as many stakeholders to be involve in decision-making and resource allocation.

Methodology

A mixed research method quantitative and qualitative was adapted to analyze the potential of establishing community participation. Ten in-depth interviews and 380 questionnaires were conducted to collect the primary data from local communities, representatives from tourist business sector, government agencies, APSARA Authority and private sector in June 2010. Questionnaires were used with local residents from the local community (4 communes), namely Nokor Thom commune, Kouk Chak commune, Preah Dak commune and Leang Dai commune as the main target population of the research. The residents were the representative people in each household with the

age at least 18 years old and living with their family at Angkor.

Results

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The majority of respondents were female that contributed 53.4% or 203 persons and the rest of 46.6% or 177 persons were male. The key informants (146 or 38%) were mostly in the age rang of 18-30 years old, followed by the age group at 31-45 years old (114 or 30%). In the meanwhile, respondents over 60 years old were only 10.3%. The reason was that when the researcher administered the survey to the sample households, the adult family members who were literate in the family carried out the questionnaire. Neither too young not too old age groups participated in the survey. When there were more than one adult in the family presented at the time of the survey, the family was free to choose the representative to answer the questionnaire. Therefore, the majority of respondents were in 18-30 years old age group and they sometimes decided to answer after discussing with all family members.

Of the total 380 respondent, 49.2% were married group. Followed by 35.3% single, 12.6% widowed and 2.9% divorced. Single respondents, which proved that in this society, stay single due to modernizing and coping western culture.

Regarding the religion, the majority of respondents were Buddhist that contributed 92.4% from a total 380 respondents. Muslim person were 3.7%, followed by 2.4% of Christian. There were 1.3% of respondents from other groups of religion were not mentioned. Interestingly, since Angkor is the Hindu religious place only 0.3% were Hindu respondents.

Interestingly to the note people in Angkor area quite educated. The majority of respondents (172 or 45.3%) had educational background in high school level, followed by 18.2% respondents with education at primary school level had primary level and 12.9% respondents secondary school level. There were 8.7% illiterate. Only 2.9% respondents who graduated at master's degree held. It showed that people in the Angkor area are quite educated.

The main group of respondents (84 or 22.2%) were in agricultural farming, which indicated a rural villager's traditional occupation, followed by students at 22.1% because they were more conscious

about tourism and they were active participants for this research. There were 14.2% respondents who owned self business, followed by 7.9% drivers, 6.1% working at hotel business and 5.8% having government job. Remarkably, 5.5% respondents were working at APSARA Authority.

Concerning with monthly household income, 143 (37.5%) respondents' household income was less than 200,000riel per month. This was compatible with the main occupations of residents that were agriculture-farming and students. The second largest range of income was 300,001-500,000riel (23.7%), followed by the income range at 200,001-300,000riel per-month (15%). Only 12.4% respondents earned more than 1,000,000riel Cambodian currency.

As anticipated, most respondents (244 or 64.2%) were not involved in tourism business sector. While 146 or 35.8% respondents were involved in tourism. Out of total 380 respondents, 22.26% was operating souvenir shops, followed by 20.24% involving in hotel business, 17% of restaurant owners and 14.98% running guesthouse. There were 5.25% of respondents working as tour guides or tour guiding business.

COMMUNITY OPINION WITH TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT AT ANGKOR HERITAGE SITE

Community opinion about tourism, sustainability and tourism management at Angkor Heritage Site was collected by using 380 questionnaires. The result of community opinion as illustrated in Table 1 were classified in 5 level: no opinion, strongly disagree, neutral, agree and strongly level.

There were 27 indicators about tourism, its benefit, effects, knowledge, sustainability issues and participation as shown in Table 1 below. The result of most of the indicator showed that people were strongly agreed, however, there were three indicators showing agree level (enhance community pride in unique culture, participation in planning and public relation through media). Importantly, there were 6 indicators indicating no opinion were: preservation of the cultural heritage, tourism degrades local natural environment, involve in training and meeting, involve in tourism exhibition, directly noticed from the responsible person.

Table 1. Community Opinion with Tourism Development and Management at Angkor Heritage Site

No.	Key Indicator	Mean Value	Standard Deviation	Agree Level
1.	Learn and exchange the culture with tourists	3.76	1.51	Strongly agree
2.	Relationship with tourists and other local people	3.61	1.49	Strongly agree
3.	Enhance community pride in unique culture	3.55	1.51	Agree
4.	Preservation of the culture heritage	3.88	1.56	No opinion
5.	Recognized of heritage site among tourists in term of art, traditions and dances, etc.	3.59	1.61	Strongly agree
6.	Help to create cleanliness of community	3.88	1.55	Strongly agree
7.	Promotes environmental awareness and waste management	3.71	1.53	Strongly agree
8.	Tourism helps to conserve the purity of attractions	3.63	1.58	Strongly agree
9.	Tourism degrades local natural environment	2.32	1.87	No opinion
10.	Tourism helps to preserve heritage properties	3.55	1.64	Strongly agree
11.	Local employment	3.88	1.55	Strongly agree
12.	Increase revenue	3.71	1.53	Strongly agree
13.	Quality of life is enhanced	3.63	1.58	Strongly agree

14.	Local economic is stimulated and diversified	2.32	1.87	Strongly agree
15.	The investors are attracted into community	3.55	1.64	Strongly agree
16.	Provides more business for local people	3.78	1.56	Strongly agree
17.	Tourism alleviates poverty	3.71	1.51	Strongly agree
18.	Involve in training and meeting	2.35	1.77	No opinion
19.	Involve in tourism exhibition	2.20	1.77	No opinion
20.	Public relations through medias	2.43	1.67	Agree
21.	Directly noticed from the responsible person	2.30	1.78	No opinion
22.	Directly noticed from neighbors	2.43	1.77	Fair
23.	Personally benefit from the tourism industry	2.89	1.71	Fair
24.	Participate in the tourism planning activities	2.53	1.74	Agree
25.	Participate in decision making of tourism management	2.45	1.82	No opinion
26.	Participation in tourism activities	2.69	1.82	Strongly agree
27.	Gain the benefit through tourism participations	2.62	1.78	Strongly agree

The Result from General Information Questions of Community Participation in Tourism Angkor Heritage Site

The majority of respondents (62%) stated that there were tourists visiting to their villages but their families members were not get involve in any tourism trips or exhibitions. Likewise, they believe that community participation in Angkor provide benefit to tourism development (68.9%). However, they have not participated in tourism management activities (planning, implementing, evaluation, etc.)

68.7%. Similarity, they did not undertake any types of tourism roles in their villages (70.5%), they were not involve any right, duties and responsibilities or contributions over APSARA Authority (70%). Furthermore, the majority of respondents they were not providing any home stay activities to tourists (87.4%). Most importantly the majority of respondents they did receive jobs or direct economic benefit from tourism community tourism but they wanted to involve in tourism in their community. In addition the majority of respondents 41.1% understood sustainable tourism.

Table 2. General Information about Community Participation in Tourism Angkor

No.	Issues	No (%)	Yes(%)	No Opinion
1.	Are there any tourists visiting to your village?	143 (37.6%)	237 (62.4%)	
2.	Do you or your family, selling your product/ service to tourists or tourism business?	220 (57.9%)	160 (42.1%)	
3.	Did you or your family, get involve in any tourism related trainings? (cook, guide, languages, etc.)	225 (59.2%)	155 (40.8%)	
4.	Did you or your family get involve in any tourism trips or exhibitions?	238 (62.6%)	142 (37.4%)	

5.	Are there any important places surrounding your village, which you want to preserve?	120 (31.6%)	121 (31.8%)	139 (36.6%)
6.	Do you want to involve in tourism activities? (hotel, travel, guide, etc.)	147 (38.7%)	233 (61.3%)	
7.	Does the community participation in Angkor provide benefit to tourism development?	57 (15%)	262 (68.9%)	61 (16.1%)
8.	Does the community participation help to develop infrastructures at the area?	71 (18.7%)	228 (60%)	81 (21.3%)
9.	Have you participated in tourism management activities? (planning, implementing, evaluation, etc.)	261 (68.7%)	119 (31.3%)	
10.	Are there any community participation programs in this village?	153 (40.3%)	110 (28.9%)	117 (30.8%)
11.	Do you undertake any types of tourism roles in your village?	268 (70.5%)	112 (29.5%)	
12.	Do you have any right, duties and responsibilities or contributions over APSARA Authority?	266 (70%)	114 (30%)	
13.	Do you provide any home stay activities to tourists?	332 (87.4%)	48 (12.6%)	
14.	Do you receive jobs or direct economic benefits from tourism community tourism?	252 (66.3%)	128 (33.7%)	
15.	Are there any tourism related organizations in your village?	142 (37.4%)	53 (13.9%)	185 (48.7%)
16.	Who conducts community development programs, especially in tourism sector?	a. Government: 167 (43.9%) b. Private sector: 20 (5.3%) c. Non-government: 39 (10.3%) d. Business enterprise: 6 (1.6%)		148 (38.9%)
17.	Is there any community participations related to environmental activities program in your village?	118 (31.1%)	139 (36.6%)	123 (32.3%)
18.	Is there any capacity enhancement and skill development program for community and tourism stakeholders?	155 (40.8%)	107 (28.2%)	118 (31%)
19.	Are there any systematic management of local market (bazaar) for locally produced goods?	125 (32.9%)	99 (26.1%)	156 (41%)
20.	Are there any community approaches for handicrafts productions, demonstrations and sales?	81 (21.3%)	187 (49.2%)	112 (29.5%)
21.	Is there any encouragement and cultural program to persevere local culture traditions and crafts?	215 (56.6%)	165 (43.4%)	

22. Do you know about sustainable tourism development?

If Yes, sustainable tourism development is:

- a. It is long term development: 146 (38.4%)
- b. It is environmental economic: 156 (41.1%)
- c. It means not to bring large: 31 (8.2%)
- d. It is a development of local economic: 31 (8.2%)
- e. Others: 14 (4.1%)

SWOT Analysis of Tourism Management and Development at Angkor

From the analysis of primary data from interview with stakeholders and study of secondary data about community around Angkor and its existing circumstance of community participation in sustainable tourism at Angkor, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats SWOT of tourism management and development at Angkor Heritage Site in Cambodia could be mentioned as follows:

1. Strength

The strongest strength Angkor is a world heritage site listed by the UNESCO, having the unique and world famous Angkor historical and architectural resources. It is rich in culture and art with important archaeological attractions. Further more, it is a destination in the world that had high value for money. Tourist they can easily find tourists guide. It is the safe destination with strong law enforcement. Not only is that Angkor promoting community participation toward conservation. Likewise accessible on short arid frequent scheduled air flights from Phnom Penh, and relatively good airport facilities.

2. Weakness

The main weakness of this heritage site were: mass poverty among the local community with lack of awareness, not enough developed tourism sector around the area, limited tourism management capacity, and limited cultural maintenance and environmental protection, lacking of infrastructures development. This site is also lacking the quality of goods and services, loss of environment and culture. There aren't well developed water supply, sanitation and garbage management systems. Indeed low level of community participation and lacking the information communication facilities.

3. Opportunities

The main opportunity of heritage tourism is that the tourism is the largest economic sector in the world, furthermore the trends of tourism is deviated towards heritage, sustainable and community tourism. This site has multi image such as it is famous for religious, architectural and famous for village tourism. By the globalization it becomes good time to start small business and get extra income. The geographical location epically located near by the Thailand is the one of the opportunity of this site. The government rules and easier visa system also other opportunity to prompt tourism. It provides the opportunity to learn new skills and other culture and to promote cultural identity. UNESCO supporting for heritage it has potentiality for heritage, pilgrimage and general tourism. The friendly hospital local people, theirs multi culture, peace and security system and government promoted investment and immigration systems are the positive things of this destination at Angkor.

4. Threats

This site also has some threats as follows: loss of environment and culture, rich people from outside the community buying the land and locals are replacing that results the loss of local cultures, traditions and economic benefits to the locals. Jealously from other communities and people with power/arrogance threading the site. Outsider do not respect community and without active community leadership in all dimension of management always danger of un-sustainability. Seasonality, tourism situation and economic crisis the problems. Furthermore, there are the great threats of quality standards, challenges to generate income for local and building strong collaboration among the stakeholders.

CONCLUSIONS

The research of local community participation indicated that there lack for sustainable tourism planning and management of Angkor. Therefore, community participation is crucially necessary in order to achieve sustainable tourism management of Angkor. Government should make participatory framework by improving existing rules and regulations. It needs to encourage the community people to run tourism business, such as home stay and accommodation, sell handicrafts and provide opportunities for employment. Importantly, government should provide the financial support to those businesses through various types of funding and soft loans. The APSARA Authority should regularly provide the reasonable and certain distribution percentage of economic benefits to the community.

In addition, government, local government and the APSARA Authority should launch various human resource development programs in Angkor, including trainings, orientation, exhibits and skill development activities that can overcome the gap of demand for skill workforce as well as to create economic benefits.

Evidently, partnership among all stakeholders can reinforce the local traditions, products the provides differentiation in identity. Government, APSARA Authority and private sectors in tourism epically; priority should be given to make a direct mechanism to involve community in tourism sectors. Community people should be organized and make them able to get economic, social and cultural benefits from heritage tourism as well as from all types of tourism.

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