

# **DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURAL TOURISM TOWARDS THE SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES**

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## **Abstract**

Cultural tourism there is a variety of details such as sightseeing tours. ruins of the past admire the beauty of ancient objects, the way of life of people in the community Participating in important traditions of that nation, including going to temples to make merit and vipassana meditation including the diversity of ethnic groups that have continued to inherit the local identity of the group. Therefore, it can attract the attention of tourists. Ability to access a variety of tourist attractions, both naturally occurring and man-made. Between cultural tourism and tourism field trip Buddhist tourism. Present, it is found that cultural tourism is about to disappear due to the influence of changes in technology. social change. Therefore, there must be development of cultural tourism management, tourism development that can be conscious of conservation of natural and cultural resources. However, it is necessary to have an important development component, namely having an organization for management. There is a good management system. There is support for the development of quality of life and community economy. Promoting community culture, caring for the environment together in the community creating learning and having good service, rebalancing to promote sustainable cultural tourism Support participation in the promotion of cultural tourism that is socially and

environmentally responsible, provided that the development guidelines must truly come from the needs of the community and lead to economic sustainability of the community.

**Keyword:** Develop cultural tourism; Sustainability; Community Economy

## Introduction

Tourism is considered a major industry that brings substantial income into Thailand. Currently, the Thai government continues to support tourism through policies and budget allocations aimed at improving and transforming tourist destinations to attract visitors, ultimately leading to the development of local economies. However, development of tourist destinations in some areas is lagging behind, particularly in popular tourist spots, resulting in inadequate physical infrastructure. (Chanwit Kasetsiri, (1997)

Tourism comes in various forms, including agritourism, industrial tourism, and cultural tourism. There is diversity in the details, such as visiting ancient ruins, admiring antique artifacts, participating in significant cultural festivals, visiting temples for merit-making, and engaging in meditation retreats. The recent trend of combining cultural tourism with educational tourism and Buddhist pilgrimage tourism covers tourism in two dimensions:

1) Buddhist pilgrimage tourism in the worldly dimension involves traveling to visit ancient sites, relics, and Buddhist art exhibitions.

2) Buddhist pilgrimage tourism in the spiritual dimension involves religious practices such as making offerings, paying respects to virtuous monks, and engaging in meditation.

In Thai society, where Buddhism is a dominant religion, there are different terms used for Buddhist tourism and pilgrimage tourism due to the prevalence of Buddhism, with temples serving as centers for merit-making in all activities.

Developing well-known cultural tourist destinations, natural tourist attractions, and distinctive ethnic communities is essential for local economic development driven by sustainable tourism. Emphasizing community

involvement in tourism management directly involving community members, organizations, or related agencies alongside the tourism circuit contributes to the sustainability of current tourism trends. Cultural tourism plays an increasingly significant role in Thailand's tourism industry, promoting a beautiful image, preserving cultural heritage, and traditions within domestic tourist destinations. (Kannika Khamdee, 2012)

Analyzing key issues in developing cultural tourism to drive sustainable economic development for communities is crucial. Key contents include understanding the context of cultural tourism, its significance, conceptual frameworks for cultural tourism management, and developing tourist destinations for sustainable economic benefits to communities. Tourism has a significant impact on the Thai economy, and promoting the development of cultural tourism can contribute to sustainable economic growth for communities.

## **Cultural Tourism Context**

Cultural tourism is a form of tourism aimed at studying and learning about ways of life, history, arts, and various traditional festivals, both long-standing and specially organized, or tourism that utilizes culture as raw material or as a tourism resource. Cultural and heritage tourism allows tourists to directly experience the authentic cultures of different nations, fostering respect for the cultures of neighbors, other communities, as well as our own. It requires a foundation of respect for culture, dignity, and people, as disrespecting the culture of others may lead to reciprocated disrespect.

Ideas for cultural tourism should encompass planning in historically significant areas and consider various factors. The principles of cultural tourism planning can be summarized as follows: Decision-making in tourism planning and development must consider the physical and cultural values of the area. Formulating tourism formats within communities should consider the community's potential to accommodate tourists physically, various service systems, and cultural sensitivities. (Woraphong Phukpu, 2021)

Tourism development must maintain a balance of cultural and community lifestyles as a core principle, ensuring no negative impact on the quality of cultural heritage and community life. Tourism management and development should be sustainable.

Communities should play a role in tourism planning and conservation from the outset.

Benefits from tourism development should be equally distributed among community members, albeit in varying forms. Jittranuchit (2005) outlined four principles of cultural tourism:

Cultural tourism should involve studying and gathering information about the significance and history of cultural resources in the destination, enhancing the value of the tourist experience while instilling pride in the local cultural heritage.

Cultural tourism should foster a sense of responsibility among local communities to manage their resources, benefiting from tourism in various forms such as employment opportunities, guiding services, transportation services, and souvenir sales. Cultural tourism should provide knowledge to all involved parties, including tourists, tourism administrators, tourism business operators, and local residents, promoting awareness of cultural and environmental conservation. Cultural tourism should respect the cultures of neighbors and other communities, as well as one's own culture.

Additionally, nine important aspects of cultural tourism include: Preservation of historical sites, arts, and traditions to provide the best cultural tourism resources for future generations. Sustainable management across economic, social, and environmental aspects to minimize negative impacts on the environment. Showcasing local lifestyles and cultures as attractions for tourists, allowing them to learn about social and cultural differences. Providing knowledge to all stakeholders, emphasizing cultural and environmental conservation. Ensuring local communities actively participate in tourism management and benefit from tourism income distribution. Marketing tourism services based on genuine cultural and environmental conservation. Ensuring tourists' satisfaction and meeting their expectations by offering tailored cultural experiences.

Adhering to the area's capacity and maintaining cleanliness for tourists' safety and satisfaction. Prioritizing tourist safety and property protection to ensure peace of mind for visitors. In conclusion, cultural tourism offers a platform for learning, appreciation, and sustainable development, benefiting both tourists and local communities while preserving cultural and environmental heritage.

## **Promoting Cultural Tourism**

Currently, Buddhist tourism has become increasingly popular. Many tourists prefer to visit temples to participate in religious activities and practice meditation. This trend is evident across various tourist demographics, with travelers often utilizing holiday periods, especially during significant religious festivals, to engage in spiritual practices. Some have recognized the benefits and are increasingly pursuing occupations related to Buddhist tourism or utilizing temple spaces for related professions.

Key strategies for the development of Buddhist tourism and culture include promoting religious tourism marketing, developing religious tourism destinations and activities, managing religious tourism and cultural activities, developing human resources for religious tourism and culture, and establishing a network of cultural and tourism geography. The Buddhist tourism industry in the ASEAN community is showing promising growth and potential, with unique tourist destinations featuring interesting lifestyles, community cultures, and traditions. Proper government promotion could lead to sustainable community development through tourism networks linked to national tourism. (Phra Sutheerattanabandit, 2016)

The Department of Religion, Ministry of Culture, aims to: Serve as a guide for temples nationwide to conduct merit-making activities along tourist routes during various religious festivals, providing happiness to Buddhist tourists both physically and spiritually.

Promote temples as vibrant tourist destinations capable of maintaining the purity and beauty of Buddhist faith and Thai cultural traditions, as well as readiness in terms of area, personnel, and religious activities to impress tourists.

Support and promote Thai tourism in the religious dimension, creating a network of spiritual tourism with temples as places to learn about religion and the sufficiency economy philosophy, which is based on sufficiency according to Buddhist principles. Establish a system for managing pilgrimage routes tailored to communities, catering to the needs of religious tourists, creating connections, and promoting equality in seeking opportunities based on the development of religious tourism.

Enhance cooperation and support for the involvement of government, private sector, and civil society in revitalizing and advancing religious tourism, strengthening community economies. Utilize merit-making tourism activities as a tool for developing quality of life, focusing on people-centered development activities related to other forms of tourism that can facilitate mutual learning.

Stimulate religious tourism activities to encourage people, especially children and youth, to understand the value of religion, local customs, and cultural traditions, as well as to reintroduce important fundamental values to Thai society, such as compassion, love, and cultural heritage, through pilgrimage paths that promote tourism in the right direction.

Utilize merit-making tourism activities as a tool for disseminating accurate information about religion, culture, customs, and ways of life in the region to the public, supporting tourism aimed at achieving community involvement, social fund utilization, collaborative power, and adherence to the sufficiency economy philosophy for sustainable development through tourism. These strategies aim to create benefits for society and the nation by promoting sustainable tourism development.

## **Guidelines for the Development of Cultural Tourism Sites**

The development of cultural tourism involves community-based tourism development processes and tourism management from cultural communities under the support of the Department of Cultural Promotion, Ministry of Culture. The components of cultural tourism community development can be summarized into 5 components:

1) Management of Cultural Heritage and Local Resources: This involves processes aimed at creating awareness, appreciation, love, and pride of the community towards its cultural heritage and local resources. It starts with the collection of data on community cultural heritage such as historical information, local wisdom, traditional festivals, ceremonies, architecture, etc. Then, these data are systematically managed to promote conservation, restoration, and dissemination.

2) Sustainable Management: This refers to the design, planning, and implementation of tourism management strategies, measures, and agreements to prevent and reduce negative impacts on culture, society, economy, and the environment. It includes community organization management for tourism management that aligns with the local context of the area, including economic, social, and cultural aspects.

3) Participation: It involves the involvement of stakeholders, both beneficiaries and affected parties, or those involved in cultural tourism community management. Participation levels vary, including planning, management, benefit-sharing, and responsibility-sharing. It should align with the context of the area in terms of geography, economy, society, and culture.

4) Activity and Learning Process: This includes presenting stories of cultural heritage and local resources through activities and learning processes that focus on providing knowledge, understanding, awareness, and value appreciation from participating in real situations, actual practices, and local knowledge transfer.

5) Conservation, Restoration, Dissemination, and Value Creation: This refers to the processes of tourism that play a significant role in conserving, restoring, disseminating, and creating value for cultural heritage and local resources, both economically and socially.

The development of cultural tourism with community participation leads to sustainable economic development of the community. Key points for achieving sustainable cultural tourism development include: (Kittiya Pruksakit, 2018)

1) Promoting and stimulating domestic cultural tourism, creating consumer confidence in spending on cultural tourism, and strengthening the grassroots economy of the community.

2) Developing human resources and cultural tourism sites, focusing on adapting to the new normal, increasing competitiveness in the long term, and developing cultural products and services to increase their value.

3) Promoting market communication and marketing with new visual identities, promoting the community as a cultural tourism destination that creates impressions and unique selling points that both Thai and foreign tourists think about and decide to travel with impressive presentations.

4) Rebalancing to promote sustainable cultural tourism that is socially and environmentally responsible, reducing reliance on any one market, spreading tourism geographically and temporally, and generating income from cultural tourism based on maintaining balance between economy, society, and the environment.

Conclusion, the process of developing tourism with community involvement aims to achieve sustainable economic development, fostering prosperity alongside other forms of tourism. Cultural tourism industries thrive on unique destinations showcasing interesting lifestyles, community cultures, and traditions that appeal to tourists. Proper state promotion can lead to development and the creation of tourism networks linking national and international tourism, aiming for holistic development with the primary goal of ensuring the sustainability, prosperity, and resilience of cultural tourism destinations.

## **Promoting Cultural Tourism**

Involves strengthening and empowering communities to develop their areas sustainably. Both governmental and private organizations prioritize cultural tourism, actively participating in community activities such as revitalization efforts, traditional events, and the creation of amenities like stone platforms for tourist convenience. Improving and beautifying landscapes attract tourists while educating them about the community's history and significance



deepens their understanding and fosters a sense of responsibility towards nature and the environment.

Community involvement in promoting cultural beliefs and traditions, as well as establishing tourism routes, is essential. Key strategies for developing cultural tourism destinations include promoting religious and cultural tourism markets, managing religious and cultural tourism activities, developing tourism personnel, and establishing geographical networks for cultural tourism. The Buddhist and cultural tourism industry in the ASEAN community is growing and has high potential, with unique destinations showcasing interesting lifestyles, community cultures, and traditions that appeal to tourists. Proper state promotion can lead to development and the creation of tourism networks linking national and international tourism, aiming for holistic development with the primary goal of ensuring the sustainability, prosperity, and resilience of communities. (Praphunphong Chinnaphong, 2022)

## **The Roles in Promoting Cultural Tourism**

The roles in promoting cultural tourism involve various stakeholders, including the government, cultural councils, private sector, and tourists themselves. **Role of the Government:** The government plays a crucial role in promoting tourism by allocating budgets for area maintenance and infrastructure development. It encourages community participation in decision-making processes, allowing them to voice their opinions and contribute to the development of their areas. This includes activities like improving infrastructure, creating cultural symbols within villages, and fostering local trade to establish new markets. Moreover, the government supports cleanliness efforts, encourages schools and neighboring villages to participate in temple maintenance and festival activities, and promotes local tourism through advertisements and public relations campaigns.

**Role of Cultural Councils:** Cultural councils typically establish funds for both material and spiritual development. They initiate projects like "Temple Kids Doing Good" to instill love, attachment, and conservation of cultural heritage among children under ten years old. These councils facilitate informal discussions and seminars to exchange ideas on community maintenance and

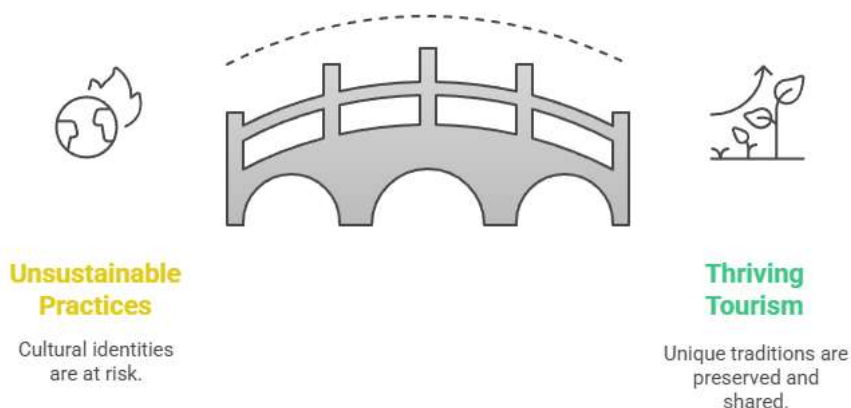
conservation, emphasizing the importance of community involvement and transparency.

**Role of the Private Sector:** The private sector contributes to tourism promotion by providing training for guides and actively participating in driving tourism initiatives. They present proposals at provincial meetings and engage with provincial governors to advocate for community tourism development. Additionally, private entities allocate funds for environmental improvements, such as waterfronts, to enhance transportation options, like traditional boat rides, thus enriching the tourist experience.

**Role of Tourists:** Tourists play a significant role in promoting tourism by supporting local products and spreading awareness about tourism activities in the area. They also encourage the dissemination of tourism information by urging relevant agencies to compile comprehensive data for tourists to study and promote. This comprehensive engagement helps in fostering economic growth and cultural preservation within communities.

## New Knowledges

### Sustainable Cultural Tourism: A Bridge to Shared Benefits



**Figure 1:** Development of Cultural Tourism Towards the Sustainable Economy of Local Communities.

## **Conclusions**

Government organizations, private sector entities, and tourists each have their own historical backgrounds and perspectives on cultural tourism. These perspectives are influenced by factors such as community importance, the tourism landscape in the area, and efforts to promote cultural tourism. It's evident that each group gathers information and understanding through different channels, depending on their context and role. For example, local residents, being part of the community, have firsthand knowledge and prioritize community aspects, leading to a deep understanding of the historical background, both in terms of recorded history and folklore. Moreover, their long-standing presence in the area allows them to observe the tourism landscape and contribute to cultural tourism promotion strategies.

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