Activities Guideline of Cultural Tourism: A case study of Khonghae Floating Market, Hatyai District, Songkhla

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ABSTRACT

The article has aimed to study activities guideline of cultural tourism in Khonghae floating market, Khonghae sub-district, Hatyai district, Songkhla province. It focused on the topic of floating market management. The qualitative methodology was used to collect data. It found that Khonghae floating market has initiated from August 2008 by local government. By that time, the local government had policy to support both environmental conservation and economic promotion in community. The activities guideline of cultural tourism should be connected with other tourism sites because there are many tourism sites in the area of Klonghae municipality. Moreover, the tourism information should be updated for tourists continuously. The Buddhist temples, livelihood of fisherman and agricultural and cultural performances are the main products to support cultural tourism of Khonghae floating market.

Keyword: Cultural tourism, Khonghae Floating market, Activities guideline

1. Background

The tourists’ consumption behaviors are changing so it has broadly impacted to types of tourism. Tourists, in the old day, visited natural tourism attractions such as seas, waterfalls, mountains, and caves in order to observe natural phenomena and manmade tourism sites, for example, Buddhist temples, castles, palaces, and old building. As people became richer and transportation improved (Galvani 2005), tourists have become new comers to the sites they increasingly visit. They also need to know more community information and tourism site management, including sharing the benefits of tourism within community or stakeholder. Alternative tourism (D’mello 2008), has many type such as ecotourism, community-based tourism, health tourism, gastronomic tourism, and rural tourism, and cultural tourism is the
one choice. The cultural tourism is tourism-oriented alternative to the academic tradition of learning and cultural life of Environmental Conservation (Ratanakomut, 2006). There are a variety of activities of cultural tourism. The floating market is the type of tourism that able to draw the attention from tourists. Meanwhile the local communities in many areas agree with take placing of floating market activities. However, the floating market is pattern of space to exchange products between traders and sellers and it is the type of cultural tourism that show the traditional way of life of people living beside the river bank.

2. Objective

To study activities guideline of cultural tourism in Khonghae floating market, Khonghae sub-district, Hatyai district, Songkhla province, Thailand.

3. Research Question

How is the activities’ guideline of cultural tourism in Khonghae floating market?

4. Technical Terms

4.1 Tourism is travel for recreational, leisure or business purposes. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tourism)

4.2 The World Tourism Organization defines tourists as people "traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tourism)

4.3 Cultural, heritage and historical tourism describes all tourist trips that include cultural activities (e.g. the visiting of monuments or sites), as well as experiences and interaction with local people (UNESCO, 1972).

4.4 Floating market is one of cultural tourism activities which consists of products buying and selling by small boat and showing traditional way of life.

5. Research Methodology

This research focused on the topic activities guideline of cultural tourism in Khonghae floating market. The semi-structured interview (Simaraks and Supatera. 1987) and observation were used to collect data. The sampling consists of six groups including: 1) 6 government officers 2) 15 dealers in the floating market 3) 10 tour operators 4) chairman of the temple 5) 5 heads of community and 6) 15 tourists who visiting floating market.
5.1 Data Collection

5.1.1 Secondary data was collected from relevant reports, research document and information from Khonhae Municipal office.

5.1.2 Primary data was collected in March 2011, as follows:

5.1.2.1 Field survey was made to collect the structure of community and tourism resources.

5.1.2.2 Individual semi-structured interviews were collected from government officers, dealers in the floating market, tour operators, chairman of the temple, heads of community and tourists who visiting floating market. The collected data was combined with direct observation.

5.2 Study Site

The Klonghae Floating Market is located in Khonhae sub-district, Hat Yai district, Songkhla province (Figure 1), about 10 km. from Hat Yai city.

Figure 1. The location of Klonghae Floating Market

Source: Google earth

5.3 Data Analysis:

Data was analyzed and reviewed after the fieldwork. Incomplete or confliction data was filled in or clarified during further interview, so content analysis technique was used for analysis data and also triangulation technique was used for cross checking data.
6. Result

6.1 History of Khonghae Floating Market

The Khonghae floating market was established under the local politician’s policy to develop the community’s environment and economic. The floating market has firstly opened in the Songkran festival (water festival) on 13 April 2008 to introduce new tourism destination for cultural tourists and the floating market administrators need to know the tourists’ feedback to adjust its activities. The grand opening was made in August 2008. In the early period, most tourists were local people and the foreigners – Malaysian and Singaporean tourists- visited it in latter.

6.2 Policy of Khonghae Floating Market

The policy for floating market management by local politician consists of as follow;

6.2.1 Environment Conservation;

Cannel should be improved such as water treatment, dam construction in upper cannel, planting a Vetiveria Zizanioides Nash on the bund, EM ball (Effective Microorganisms), scoring cannel etc.

Landscape in community should be improved to support tourism and population in community.

Promoting packages of products sold in floating market by using natural raw materials such as bamboo for a cup of glass, banana leaf to wrap up food and other etc.

6.2.2 Economic;

Right of trader; the local government gives first right to local people for selling products in floating market and also pay attention to local products.

Price of product; the local government controls the price of products by determining prices per unit not over 20 Baht such as food, juice etc.

Connection with Tour operators; the local government works together with both Thai and foreigner tour operators to contain floating market in tour program.

6.3 Cultural tourism resources in Klonghae floating market

After field survey it found that tourism resources of Klonghae floating market and near-by area consisting of local food, traditional dress, Manora (local dance), Wat
Klonghæe, religious rituals and near-by tourism sites such as Wat Khutao, Wat Narangnok, Lampho Beach etc.

6.4 Activities’ Guideline of Cultural Tourism in Klonghæe floating market

6.4.1 Connection of tourism route; the FM’s tourism route can connect to Wat Narangnok, Wat Khutao and Lampho beach by boat, practicing local dance in Wat Klonghæe, eating local food and shopping local products.

6.4.2 Information; publishing tourism resources and activities through local news, poster, cut-out, brochure, local radio and website http://www.klonghæe.go.th

6.4.3 Attraction; the floating market open from 03.00 pm – 09.00 pm. every Friday – Sunday.

6.4.4 Products of tourism in Klonghæe floating market; there are local food and local products, souvenirs, cultural performance, specific events such as Songkran festival, the legend of Klonghæe festival etc.

7. Discussion and Conclusion

The Klonghæe floating market was established in August 2008 according to local politician’s policy to support both environmental conservation and economic promotion in community. The activities guideline of cultural tourism should be connected with near-by tourisms to present the way of life, culture and tradition of Klonghæe people for both Thai and foreigner tourists and create the job and add income for local people. Moreover, the management of activities in floating market should be handle by local government with local people and equally income distributed. These activities could lead to cultural tourism in the future. The results of the research also correspond to Napaphat Charoenphon et al. (2011), who said that there are seven guidelines to develop cultural tourism management: 1) Organization; 2) Culture Conservation; 3) Environment; 4) Product, Service, and Price Standards; 5) Activity; 6) Infrastructure; and 7) Public Relations. The floating markets in the central region, therefore, emphasize water sources, lifestyle, culture, and traditions that correspond to the community, the principles of cultural tourism management, development strategies that could lead to success in managing floating markets in the central region.

8. Recommendation

The activities guideline of cultural tourism in Klonghæe floating market have to work together involving stakeholders – Klonghæe municipal office, traders in floating market, tour operators, guides, tourists including local people by promoting conservative tourism activities restoring culture, tradition and way of life of Klonghæe people such as boating to observe the
way of life, organizing traditional Songkran festival, local dance performance, traditional dress and tenth Lunar month festival in floating market.

However, cultural tourism in FM should be the center point to connect with near-by tourism destinations such Wat Kutao, Wat Narangnak and Lampho beach by boat.

9. Reference


http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tourism