

NEW PARADIGM FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM OF HUA HIN

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Abstract

In Thailand, tourism industry strongly influences the economics regime of the country; it generates a good economic value to local all over country such as creating jobs, transforming the local economy with good returns, accelerating new investment including infrastructures, revitalizing old community, retaining traditional life style, gaining opportunities for stakeholders and expanding experiences for visitor. It can be said that the southern railway construction brought about tourism in various places along railroad and only high ranking people, nobles and high commissioners were able to visit those places at first. Among the places, there was a small fishing village with a beautiful nature and landscape, clear sky, blue water, clean white sand beach decorated with group of stones. Later this place was renamed as Hua Hin by Krompra Nraes Vorarit and was selected to be a seaside resort for high ranking and came to be a well-known tourist destination respectively. This article will present impacts which cause the disappearance of tangible and intangible heritage values of historic town and provide a new paradigm for sustainable tourism in Hua Hin as well as to be benefit to a similar site with similar problems.

Keywords: New Paradigm, Sustainable Tourism

1. Introduction

Hua Hin has long been a focus for tourism in Thailand. Tourism has shaped the city and has underwritten Hua Hin's economy for a century. Hua Hin is now facing a new era of tourism, some of it in keeping with the seaside resort's long legacy of visitors, and other aspects of visitation more similar to patterns elsewhere in Thailand. The challenge for Hua Hin is to redirect its visitor industry to better serve the area's longstanding traditions and special character.

The characteristic of the beach together with the beauty and serenity of the place turned it into a unique seaside destination for royalty and commoner in that order. Even when the time has gone by, Hua Hin is still one of the most popular places and tourist destinations for both Thais and foreigners because of its charms; beach, tourism activities and the sense of historic town.

However, tourism is not bringing only economic growth to the place but also resulting in various negative impacts. According to marketing database of Tourism Authority of Thailand (T.A.T.), the number of visitors in Hua Hin increased rapidly over the past few years. A huge demand of visitors shaped the historic town into a messy touristic town suddenly. As a consequence of that, there are impacts revealed in social, economic, cultural, environmental and physical aspect.

Obviously, the economy of Hua Hin (one of the fishing grounds for mackerel in Gulf of Thailand) in the past based on fishery while in the present the fishery profession is extinct (but there are some small fishing boats for coastal fisheries remain) and has been replaced with tourism.

These matters are caused by rapid tourism, thus Hua Hin necessably needs a new paradigm to manage its sustainability, exceptionally to retain the significant values of historic town as well as tangible and intangible heritage values before they are forgotten and disappeared. It is challenging to develop and preserve the old at the same time because tourism and heritage have a close relationship, but it is often difficult to balance the aims of both and Hua Hin provides an excellent test case for doing so.

2. New Paradigm of Tourism

The economic paradigm of traditional tourism, based in the “tourism industry” concept, can ignore this revolution. The weight of this middle class and its instruction and cultural level, in parallel with the emancipation of the working woman, a contemporary youth increasingly educated and the anticipation of an active

retirement in segments of the middle class, generated a change in the social weight of this class and in the categories of "taste" and travelling "motivation".

Rehabilitation of the heritage and the conservation of nature and cultural objects has become an important issue for business tourism. It helps strengthen their traditional chains of value, taking into account the new motivations and preferences of the middle class, who are now interested in what cultural tourism and tourism of nature have to offer. Thus, the ecological assessment of the economy becomes an imperative of the tourism economy imposed by their evolution to a paradigm that includes preferential consumption of products from the cultural tourism and tourism of nature. If not, the traditional tourist destinations risk losing gradually the middle class public and turning to a downward curves (Butler, 1980). But through this we can also anticipate the renewal cycle of the tourist destinations.

This perspective, which is beyond the economy and the traditional definition of tourism, should leading to the study and research of the tourism phenomenon as a process of sociocultural anthropology and also studying his historical-political conditions, their own economy, in the larger framework of the Philosophy of Nature, the Environment Philosophy and Environmental Ethics. Without depreciating the contributions of the economic theories that developed many aspects of tourism business network, demand and consumption, apparent transformation into industry, upgrading of natural resources in a sustainable tourist model.

It is not enough applying the methods of economics' science to the economy of tourism, but researching and conceptualizing as touristic merchandise is produced, the process how is shaped their value, price and concurrence, what is the nature and economic essence of tourism activity, questioning traditional concepts of "service sector" and "tourism industry".

Tourism is not only and essentially an economic activity, and, perhaps, their growing economic importance, is inseparable from some of the most profound political and sociological changes that have marked the 20th century: the growth of the middle class and the institutionalization of the democratic rights of citizens, and even more radical change, the repositioning of the human being in the framework of the Philosophy of Nature, the Environment Philosophy and those Environmental Ethics; if tourism understand it or not, blinded by the appearance of economic forms and uninterrupted success of these activities during the last fifty years, marked by the empiricism and the concept of tourism as a single economic activity of services. Indeed it is an economic activity, but faraway the traditional business.

This is important particularly in our time, in which a new paradigm of tourism is emerging - environmental tourism, which means cultural tourism, nature tourism, and rural tourism, with their specific products and renewed environmental sustainability requirements, for all other tourist products.

3. Sustainable Tourism for Hua Hin

Hua Hin quickly became recognized and popular among elites and expatriates and the town developed rapidly until political circumstances changed in 1932 during the reign of King Rama VII. However, tourism in Hua Hin prospered under reign of King Rama VII and after World War II. Hua Hin developed, further, Klai Kang Won palace was built, and secondly the royal golf course and Hotel Hua Hin were expanded as was the first modern market, Chat Chai. When the Rama VI bridge was completed and people could take the train from Hua Lumpong station cross over Chaophraya River, tourism increased rapidly. Prior to this the rail had increased arrivals from 10,000 to 30,000 people in 1927-1928.

Infrastructure and utilities were rebuilt while the rail was improved and hotels were reconstructed and extended accordingly. The popularity of Hua Hin was reflected through novel such as Prinsana, etc. Even though there were new seaside resorts or beach towns such as Bangsue, Bangsane, Pattaya, and Phuket, Hua Hin was still recognized as a serene seaside resort, famous for its fine white sand beach and clear sea water. That was a characteristic of the town in that time and continues until today.

Local people feel that tourism caused rapid growth, beginning around 1520 years ago. Hotels in different scales were built. These included guesthouses which were modified from houses in order to fulfill tourists' demand at that time. Typical businesses were replaced by businesses related to tourism, such as bars, restaurants, souvenir shops, massage parlors, and costume tailor shops, etc. New tourist attractions were added to Hua Hin's list, for example Plearn Wan, Cicada, Venetian, Black Mountain Water Park, and Vana Nava Water Park.

This was probably the turning point of Hua Hin tourism, beginning with the private or niche, attraction with the purpose of rehabilitation and relaxation, then transformation to mass tourism after the arrival of southern rails. Motivation changed too, from relaxation to eating, taking photos and sharing social media.

The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) launched International Cultural Tourism Charter in 1999 to manage tourism at places of heritage significance and also concerns about sustainable tourism as below:

Tourism should bring benefit to host communities and provide important means and motivation for them to care for and maintain their heritage and cultural practices. The involvement and co-operation of local and/or indigenous community representatives, conservationists, tourism operators, property owners, policy makers, those preparing national development plans and site managers is necessary to achieve a sustainable tourism industry and enhance the protection of heritage resources for future generations.

In Thailand eco-tourism was first initiated in 1996 by Tourism Authority of Thailand (T.A.T.) and the National Ecotourism Policy was launched in order to develop the sustainable tourism in Thailand. This policy became part of the National Economic and Social Plan 8 (1997-2001) in the Improving Natural Resource and Environmental Management chapter with details as follows:

Designate and demarcate local ecosystem zones, taking into account any cultural and traditional diversity within the zones so that local people's existing lifestyles can contribute to the sustainable management of natural resources and the environment.

Conserve Natural and Heritage Sites by formulating managerial and conservation guidelines; for example the registration and declaration of area of natural beauty and heritage sites. The development potential of these areas should be upgraded in such a way as to enhance economic activity and promote eco-tourism.

In 2007 the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) was established by 32 organizations and aim to encourage all over the world to understand the practical which lead to tourism sustainability. Designated Areas for Sustainable Tourism Administration (DASTA) has defined sustainable tourism that enhances GSTC criteria in order to bring up tourism development for sustainability in tourism management.

4. Conclusion

Hua Hin not only has a long history with the beauty of the beach and the serenity but it also still has outstanding wood houses (in different conditions), the colonial architecture at the Railway Hotel, the railway station and the last group of tricycles. Besides that, the intangible culture, such as traditional plays and traditional

ceremonies related to the community and livelihood, contain different values that enhance the significant entity of Hua Hin town and its tourism as well.

The rapid tourism growth caused Hua Hin to be overdeveloped and grow faster than it should. This is reflected in infrastructure development, mega projects such as High Speed Rail, the Thailand Riviera project and in tourism, which came from national and local policies, together with tourism promotion by T.A.T. These all contribute both benefit and detriment, to local people and the community as a whole. The impacts found in various aspects e.g. socio-cultural, economic, environment, and physical of this article emphasize the development that has affected people and the physical character of the city.

Finally, non-stakeholders are angered and disturbed by the impacts of tourism on their daily lives, in contrast to the stakeholders. To balance heritage and tourism, the International Cultural Tourism Charter (ICOMOS) and sustainability tools enhance with CBT are proposed as a new paradigm for sustainable tourism management in Hua Hin. In addition, the creativity of events, especially during low season, will help to balance and disperse tourists as well.

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