

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Currently, tourism is one of the world's biggest and fastest growth industries. In 2004, 760 million international arrivals were recorded which represented almost US\$622 billion worth of receipts. Tourism has grown 25 percent in the past 10 years with a forecast of 1,500 million international arrivals by 2020, more than double the level at the moment.

Tourism in Thailand has been systematically managed and developed since 1960 by the Tourism Authority of Thailand whose aims are to increase tourism earnings from the domestic and international market towards a substantial source of income for the country. This in turn has brought about major changes to the infrastructure including large construction projects that has helped develop specific rural areas. Furthermore, this has led to the modernization and prosperity for local communities, private sectors, and the country as a whole. However, tourism generates downstream negative affects to destination areas when it is mass marketed; these include the integration of tourist cultures to the primitive way of local life, social problems, inflation, the cost of living, unequal income distribution, etc. Therefore it has been necessary to manage and plan every aspect relating to the development of tourism to reduce negative consequences that directly affect communities when it considered as part of destination.

The Ninth National Economic and Social Development Plan (2002-2006) stated that the development vision for the next 20 years should focus on poverty alleviation and procurement of Thai well being. Therefore sustainable developments together with long term plans have been implemented so as to put into action policies and strategies for local communities. This has given local residents the powers to self administer their own community and hence to encourage participation into local development plan and/or tourism destination development plan.

Moreover, the WTO (1987) viewed that public participation on sustainable development was of major importance and a key objective. This can be interpreted that we all have a role to play and that communities need to make decisions collectively rather than having them imposed by external forces.

The Constitution of Thailand (1997) established the Tambon Administration Organization (TAO) or sub-district administration organization, in rural areas, to be decentralization and self governing organization based on the principles of people participation (Rajchagool, 1999). TAO has the authority to politically look after the 'well being' of all local residents in rural areas, this includes the physical infrastructure, supporting careers, culture, the environment, tourism, land use etc. Further, the TAO has guidelines to follow the directions and polices of national, provincial, and district with respect to planning and implementation, which aims to establish again the well being of local residents. Development in tourist destinations adjacent to the area is also one of its responsibilities.

According to its strategic development plan, the Phuket Provincial Administration Organization has a vision to be considered as a 'World class destination'. This is similar to the objective of the National Tourism Development Plan (2002-2006) whose aims are to encourage Chiangmai and Phuket to be a 'quality destination'. This is also an objective of the Phuket Provincial Administration Organization (PPAO). Therefore the Tambon administration organization (TAO) has a responsibility to manage and implement development plans in the area in accordance with this directive as set out in law.

Although the Constitution of Thailand (1997) allows local authorities to self-administrate, there have been some major obstacles to overcome within the operation of TAO. Chaisawat (2003) said that Phuket has the potential to be developed as a quality destination in a sustainable way; however, he highlighted some obstacles that still prevent it from currently achieving this objective. These include:

1. Phuket does not have a systematic mechanism that benefits the distribution of tourism amongst stakeholders, towards sustainable development.

2. Despite the fact that TAO has the authority to legally manage its area, it still has some serious obstacles to overcome with respect to management. This can be seen particularly in the cooperation amongst the stakeholders within government agencies and/or private sectors together with the management skills of administrators and indeed the management of TAO itself. Therefore primarily TAO should itself be assessed to ascertain the ability of its managers to impartially evaluate the potentiality and sustainability of tourism development.

3. Phuket does not have an independent authorized organizer or agency that directly answers for sustainable tourism development so as to advocate development in the same direction as its guidelines.

Chaisawat's research highlights some of the problems that hinder Phuket being a 'world class destination' and to ultimately fulfill the aim of the Phuket Administration Office.

Therefore this study concentrated on tourism destination planning and management of the Tambon Administration Organization and in particular the Tambon (sub-district) Sakoo. This is because tambon Sakoo has 2 natural tourist attractions Nai Yang and Nai Thon beach. Both beaches are under the jurisdiction of the Tambon Sakoo Administration Organization (TSAO) and moreover do not have additional development with respect to tourist attractions. Furthermore, the area still has traditional values and the economy is not totally dependant upon tourism, unlike Patong. This research will also consider how improvement to tourism development in Phuket could be improved if problems within the TAO can be identified. This in turn would lead to Phuket being a 'quality destination' that ultimately would benefit the local community to be self-sufficient and therefore raise its standards to current inherent economic philosophy.

1.2 Research Objectives

The objectives of the study were as follows:-

1. To study the development strategies of Tambon Sakoo Administration Organization in terms of tourism destination development.
2. To study local satisfaction and participation towards local development in Tambon Sakoo that was initiated from the development strategies of the Tambon Sakoo Administration Organization.
3. To study the implication of local development plan for tourism destination development in Tambon Sakoo, Amphur Thalang, Changwat Phuket.

1.3 Research Benefits

This study will help the Tambon Sakoo Administration Organization to understand local satisfaction and performance of its strategies. Hopefully, the result of this study will lead to a better understanding between Tambon Sakoo Administration Organization and local people to find optimum solutions to local problems together with destination development. Further, the results may stimulate local authority to the importance of tourism destination development plan which will bring about the good quality of life for resident as well as persuade more tourists visiting to such destination in local area.

1.4 Limitations of the Research

The limitations associated with the research are listed below:

1. The research focused on Tambon Sakoo (sub-district) located in the far north of Phuket Island about 30 kms from Phuket town.

2. This study focused on only some stakeholders and did not encompass everybody, for instance the local administration organization authority, Phuyaiban (village chief), Kamnan (tambon chief), all the local people who live in the geographical area, and some private sectors that have enterprises or shops in tambon Sakoo. Furthermore there were other stakeholders who were not interested at all in this research such as Sirinath national park authorities, Aeronautical Radio of Thailand (who have their head office in tambon Sakoo) and Airports of Thailand (AOT) authority that has a conflict of interest with tambon Maikhao administration organization over the responsibility of the area.

3. The study focused on certain aspects of tourism management such as sustainable development and local participation but did not take into account the working conditions of local authorities or what was the authority on tourism management.

4. There were no demographical variables i.e. age, gender, occupation, education, household income were tested with planning and implementation variables in this research.

5. The study mentioned only destination development in the context of local development, did not mention about tourist satisfaction to tourist destinations within Tambon Sakoo.

1.5 Definitions of Key Terms

1. **Tambon**-Sub-district

2. **Amphur**-District

3. **Changwat**-Province

4. **Tambon Administration Organization (TAO)** means the smallest local administrative offices of Thailand that consist of a tambon administrative authority council and a tambon administrative authority administrative committee led by the chief administrative officer as the president of TAO, work together with officer of tambon administration organization.

5. **Tambon Sakoo Administration Organization (TSAO)** means the Tambon Administration Organization where established in Tambon Sakoo, Amphur Thalang, Changwat Phuket.

6. **Three year development plan** or the middle term development plan is the local operational plan comprising e.g. vision, mission, goals, and directions of local development, development projects affiliated with development strategy, the monitoring and evaluation procedures together with indicators, etc. The role of the three year development plan is to incorporate local development strategies and budgeting together with an outsource of financial help towards projects development implementation.

7. **Tourism destination** is the given place that of interest to tourist and is equivalent to other terms such as community tourism and destination zone. The basic functional

and spatial elements include access, gateway, attraction complexes, one or more communities (with its infrastructure services and attractions), and linkage corridors between attractions and the community.