

Assessment of tourism attraction potentials in 3 eastern borders provinces

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Abstract

The objectives of this research are survey, classify and assess the potential of tourism in the three eastern borders provinces Sa Kaeo, Chanthaburi and Trat, by studying their tourist attractions. Consequently, this research is based on the qualitative research. The population is all the tourism attractions in 3 provinces which are Sa Kaeo province, Chanthaburi province and Trat province. Samples from purposive sampling include tourism attractions in those 3 provinces which are Ta Phraya District, Khok Sung District, Aranyaprathet District, and Khlong Hat District in Sa Kaeo province, Soi Dao District and Pong Nam Ron District in Chanthaburi province, Mueang District, Bo Rai District, and Khlong Yai District in Trat province. Information gathered by in-depth interview and document review. Findings are presented in terms of qualitative and descriptive insights. The results show that the pattern of tourism branches into six forms: 1) Eco-Tourism 2) Historical Attraction 3) Beach Attraction 4) Waterfall Attraction 5) Cave Attraction 6) Recreational Attraction. On the basis of these different ranges of tourism, its attractions and advantages, it was found that 1) 14 places - famous destinations that meet all criteria of tourism attraction; 2) 28 places - Famous destinations that meet some criteria of tourism attraction; 3) 3 places - destinations with potentials to be tourism attractions: there are Baan Khao Din Reservoir and Pilot project of Learning Center for Self-Sufficiency Economy of Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives (BAAC), Khlong Hat Sub-district, Baan Sabtaree exempted border crossing point, Toongkanan Sub-district and Chamrak Battle viewpoint, Chamrak Sub-district Trat.

Keywords: tourism potential, border province

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1. Introduction

Thailand is one of victims of anti-personnel mines, suffering from past conflicts with neighboring countries and border instability. It is estimated that, during 2000-2001, there are anti-personnel mine buried in 2,557 sq.m. area in 27 border provinces and Thailand-Cambodia border with as many as 504,000 people living in such risky area. Government has realized about the danger of those anti-personnel mines and required immediate destruction because such threat critically affects local livings and wellness, and hinders countrywide economic and social development. THAILAND MINE ACTION CENTER - TMAC was established by The Supreme Command Headquarter, Ministry of Interior on January 18th, 2000, with the mission to manage land mine for humanity according to obligations of Convention to prohibit use, collection, production, transfer, and destruction of anti-personnel mines. Thai government signed the agreement with other countries on December 3rd, 1997 at Ottawa, Canada. Mine action project for humanity has been implemented in 3 methods specified in Convention which are bomb disarming, bomb alert, and victim rescue. Mine action team 1-4 have been formed, including army and navy force, to conduct knowledge-sharing session about danger of land mines in order to minimize casualties

and death tolls, and pursue rescue mission to aid victims. Under command of Thailand Mine Action Center, all 4 teams of Mine Action for Humanity and private organizations have searched and destroyed land mines in risky areas since 1999. Recently, safe areas cover 2,003.1 sq.km., accounting for 78.25 percent of risky areas. There are remaining 561.95 sq.km. of risky areas [1].

In 3 eastern border provinces, local people have been reported to be more safe areas. Currently, Trat has reported 1,475 Rai of safe areas. Captain Pradit Bangchan, Deputy Commander of the 2nd Mine Action for Humanity team shared that, there are 81 risky areas of Bo Rai District, Khlong Yai District, Trat, occupying 107,415,784 sq.m. or 67,135 Rai. With mine execution since 2000 until recently, there are 78 risky areas, occupying 93,53,983 sq.m. or 58,465 Rai [2].

National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) aims to enhance quality of living, social and economic stability among communities in border provinces to ensure wealthy and sustainable lives in Thailand. Researcher would like to study potentials of tourism attractions in 3 eastern border provinces in order to support development of such locations to be new tourism destinations and also promote strength of communities.

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2. Related literature review

2.1 Tourism

Tourism Authority of Thailand categorized tourism attractions by relevancy and environments [3] 12 categories are described as follows:

1) Eco-Tourism: refers to natural-based locations that possess unique local environments. Some places are related to cultural stories that are relevant to ecosystem in which tourism management in such areas require learning process of people to stimulate knowledge transfer, environment management, and community's participation in tourism to promote awareness towards sustainable ecosystem preservation.

2) Arts and Sciences Educational Attraction Standard: refers to locations that fulfill unique interest of tourists. This is a kind of new tourism pattern that varies based on preference of people in each generation.

3) Historical Attraction: refers to locations that possess value in terms of history, archeology, religion, historic sites as well as major buildings with key milestones in history, ancient sites, parks, wall, moat, museum, temple, art and architectural-based constructions.

4) Natural Attraction: the tourism attraction areas that tourists are attracted by natural resources. These values are in terms of natural beauty, strange patterns of nature, geological or geographical sources which are uniqueness or symbol of local areas. Moreover, such distinctive nature can be valuable for academic purposes.

5) Recreational Attraction: refers to tourism areas that human have constructed for recreation, health and wellness, entertainment, and knowledge. Most of them are not likely to be significant in terms of history, archeology, religion, arts, and culture. Instead, they are likely to be entertainment community, zoo, theme park, and sport complex.

6) Cultural Attraction: refers to tourism attractions with value of arts, norms, and traditions that ancient generations have sustained for a long time. Such locations include celebration, lifestyles, arts and cultural performance, local products, costumes, languages, local tribes, etc.

7) Health Attraction – Hot Spring: require standard specifications with the objectives to define scope of responsibility for related organizations to monitor improvement criteria, share useful information to support decision making of tourists, and enhance standard of health attractions – hot spring in order to gain more acceptance among Thai and international tourists.

8) Beach Attraction: refers to tourist attractions where beach is the main natural resource that attracts tourists. Key objective of this attraction is to engage tourists with natural recreation and knowledge.

9) Natural Attraction - Waterfall: refers to tourist attractions where waterfall is the main natural resource that attracts tourists. Key objective of this

attraction is to engage tourists with natural recreation and knowledge.

10) Natural Attraction - Cave: refers to tourist attractions where cave is the main natural resource that attracts tourists. Key objective of this attraction is to engage tourists with natural recreation and knowledge.

11) Natural Attraction - Island: refers to tourist attractions where island is the main natural resource that attracts tourists. Key objective of this attraction is to engage tourists with natural recreation and knowledge.

12) Natural Attraction - Islet: Natural attraction - islet refers to tourist attractions where islet is the main natural resource that attracts tourists. Key objective of this attraction is to engage tourists with natural recreation and knowledge. Main activities include rafting, encampment and trekking.

2.2 Potentials of tourism attractions

Potentials of tourism attractions refer to readiness of locations that facilitate improvement, development, change, and attractiveness of local areas to draw attention of tourists to visit such areas. According to, criteria to assess potentials and significance of tourism attractions are as follows: [4]

- 1) Values – Pleasant appearance, uniqueness, antiquity, doctrine and religious significance, tradition
- 2) Accessibility – Tourism route, travel mode, distance, travel duration
- 3) Facilities – Accommodation, restaurant, shop
- 4) Environments – Physical appearance, weather
- 5) Limitations – Space, infrastructures
- 6) Current reputation

2.3 Potentials of tourism development

Potentials of tourism development refer to factors that support readiness of tourism attractions and tourism management. 4 criteria are considered to assess potential of tourism attractions, which are

- 1) Potential in facilitating tourism activities
- 2) Accessibility
- 3) Safety
- 4) Potential in facilitating tourism development, including cooperation of local organizations, private organizations, and government organizations that are related to tourism development [5].

2.4 Factors of tourism

Successful tourism requires 5 key factors, or 5As as follows:

- 1) Attraction – Charming, pleasant, unique resources that attract, draw interest of tourists
- 2) Accessibility – Convenient that facilitates tourists in travelling to location
- 3) Amenity – Infrastructures that promote comfort of tourists such as electricity, water supply, road, communication system
- 4) Accommodation – Hospitality and related services to facilitate tourist's visit
- 5) Activity – Set of leisure in tourism attraction such as trekking, kayaking, dancing, Bai Sri Su Kwan, etc. [6]

These 5 factors are essential for mass tourism which commonly requires facilities for convenience in

locations. On the contrary, group of specialized tourists such as conservationist, adventurer, academician are not likely to concern about facilities according that they value undamaged nature and cultures.

2.5 Related Research

Thiraporn Sangpiroon [7] has studied the potential of Ragchorakhe Canal Community, Sena District, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province. The result from the SWOT analysis showed that the strengths of Ragchorakhe Canal Community were the community having its own potential to conserve the ecosystem of the canal, the community also were well known as tourism destination for a decade, and the home stay tourism business operated by community was continuously accredited by the Department of Tourism, Ministry of Tourism and Sports. The weaknesses found in the study were poor road conditions and traffic signs. The knowledge of tourism management and cooperation among groups of local people were still limited, which led to lacking of founding support by the government and local agencies. The analysis also pointed out to opportunities that were the related government agencies support founding for conducting a research on community and provide professional training programs for local people. The assessment using ecotourism quality standards found out that the community was well suited as an ecotourism destination.

Warunee Ketsa-ard [8] has studied Potential Assessment of Agro-Tourism in Thawi Watthana District, Bangkok Metropolitan. The objectives of this study are to evaluate the Agro-Tourism potential of agricultural area in Thawi Watthana District, Bangkok Metropolitan, and to find out the process in increasing that fit properly to the area. The result reveals that, 63% of the sampling has high potential of Agro-Tourism which is highly in the linkage and closed to the major attractions, and also relate to their safety, security and basic infrastructure respectively. However, it shows that the low potential in sign and posting, information of attraction, tourism activity must be improved. The suggestions of Agro-tourism development are the community should be informed not only tourism management knowledge but also government budget to set up the information center, basic infrastructure such as parking area, restroom, sign and posting, tourism activity and public relation in welcoming tourists.

3. Methods

This qualitative research gathered relevant secondary data and contexts of 3 eastern border provinces for analysis. Research scope includes:

Population and sample: population is all the tourism attractions in those 3 provinces which are Sa Kaeo province, Chanthaburi province and Trat province. Samples from purposive sampling include tourism attractions in those 3 provinces which are Ta Phraya District, Khok Sung District, Aranyaprathet District, and Khlong Hat District in Sa Kaeo province, Soi Dao

District and Pong Nam Ron District in Chanthaburi province, Mueang District, Bo Rai District, and Khlong Yai District in Trat province.

Data collection and analysis: information gathered by in-depth interview and document review. Findings are presented in terms of qualitative and descriptive insights. Moreover, research timeframe include data collection and analysis for 2 months (April to May 2016).

4. Results

The objectives of this research are to explore, categorize, and assess potentials of tourism attractions in 3 eastern border provinces. Findings are as follows:

Table 1 shows in 3 eastern border provinces are adjacent to 9 districts and 19 sub-districts of Kingdom of Cambodia. There are 42 famous tourism attractions in such border areas.

According to Tourism Authority of Thailand, tourism attractions in 3 eastern border provinces are categorized based on significance and environment. Table 2 show potentials of 6 diverse tourism categories which are eco-tourism, historical attraction, beach, waterfall, cave, recreational tourism.

Potential Assessment of Tourism attraction can be defined as follows:

1) Famous destinations that meet all criteria of tourism attraction: They are Ban Klong Luek Border Market or Rong Kluea Market, Indo-Chinese Market, Ta Phraya National Park, Khao Soi Dao Waterfall: Wildlife reserve Khao Soi Dao, Laem Klat Beach, Lan Sai Beach, Mook Kaew Beach, Sai Ngam Beach, Sai Ngoen Beach, Mook Kaew Beach, Sai Kaew Beach, Mai Rut Beach, Ban Chuen Beach, the Thai Red Cross Association's Khao Lan Center

2) Famous destinations that meet some criteria of tourism attraction: They are Phet Pho Thong Cave, Khao Si Wa Cave, Hat Sai Kaew Cave, Queen Sirikit Chaloem Phra Kiat Public Water Park, Khao Lan Castle, La Lu, Huai Yang reservoir, Sadok Kok Thom Castle, Pha Too Chai Aranyaprathet, Khao Noi Si Chom Poo Castle, Mueang Pai Castle, Phra Siam Tawa Thirach Simulation, Arnubanphot Temple, Plant Genetic Conservation Project (RSPG), Cha Na Chai Sri Temple, Hin Dan Waterfall, Ban Pank Kard Major border crossing points, Ban Laem Major border crossing points, Khao Kaew Cave, Viewpoint Spot Thailand and Cambodia, Ki Ree Vi Han Temple, Ta sen Waterfall, Sa Pan Hin Reservoir, Sa Pan Hin Waterfall, Ban Hat Lek Border Market, The Narrowest part of Thailand, Klong Kaew National Park, Khao Saladdai Waterfall, Jewelry Market

3) Destinations with potentials to be tourism attractions: there are Baan Khao Din Reservoir and Pilot project of Learning Center for Self-Sufficiency Economy of Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives (BAAC), Khlong Hat Sub-district, Baan Sabtaree exempted border crossing point, Toongkanan Sub-district and Chamrak Battle viewpoint, Chamrak Sub-district Trat.

Table 1 Tourism attractions in 3 eastern border provinces

Province	District	Tourism Attraction
Sa Kaeo	Khlong Hat	Phet Pho Thong Cave Khao Si wa Cave or Num Cave or Khao Ta Ngong Cave Hat Sai Kaew Cave Queen Sirikit Chaloem Phra Kiat Public Water Park
	Ta Phraya	Khao Lan Castle La Lu Huai Yang reservoir Ta Phraya National Park
	Khok Sung	Sadok Kok Thom Castle
	Aranyaprathet	Ban Klong Luek Border Market or Rong Kluea Market Pha Too Chai Aranyaprathet Khao Noi Si Chom Poo Castle Muang Pai Castle Phra Siam Tawa Thirach Simulation Arnubanphot Temple Plant Genetic Conservation Project (RSPG) Indo-Chinese Market Cha Na Chai Sri Temple
Chanthaburi	Soi Dao	Khao Soi Dao Waterfall, Wildlife Reserve Khao Soi Dao
	Pong Nam Ron	Hin Dan Waterfall Ban Pank Kard Major border crossing points Ban Laem Major border crossing points Khao Kaew Cave Viewpoint Spot Thailand and Cambodia
Trat	Mueang	Ki Ree Vi Han Temple Ta Sen Waterfall Sa Pan Hin Reservoir Sa Pan Hin Waterfall Laem Klat Beach Lan Sai Beach Mook Kaew Beach
	Khlong Yai	Ban Hat Lek Border Market The Narrowest part of Thailand Sai Ngam Beach Sai Kaew Beach Mai Rut Beach (Sam Ran Beach) Ban Chuen Beach (Ma Ro Beach) The Thai Red Cross Association's Khao Lan Center
	Bo Rai	Klong Kaew National Park Khao Saladdai Waterfall Jewelry Market

Table 2 Categorize of tourism attraction in 3 eastern border provinces

Category	Province	District	Tourism Attraction
Eco-Tourism	Sa Kaeo	Khlong Hat	Queen Sirikit Chaloem Phra Kiat Public Water Park
		Ta Phraya	La Lu Huai Yang reservoir Ta Phraya National Park
		Aranyaprathet	Plant Genetic Conservation Project (RSPG)
	Trat	Mueang	Saphanhin Reservoir
Historical Attraction	Sa Kaeo	Ta Phraya	Khao Lan Castle
		Khok Sung	Sadok Kok Thom Castle
		Aranyaprathet	Arnubanphot Temple Cha Na Chai Sri Temple
	Trat	Mueang	Ki Ree Vi Han Temple
		Khlong Yai	The Narrowest part of Thailand
	Borai	Jewelry Market	

Table 2 (Continue) Categorize of tourism attraction in 3 eastern border provinces

Category	Province	District	Tourism Attraction
Beach Attraction	Trat	Mueang	Laem Klat Beach Lan Sai Beach Mook Kaew Beach
		Khlong Yai	Sai Ngam Beach Sai Ngoen Beach Sai Kaew Beach Mai Rut Beach (Sam Ran Beach) Ban Chuen Beach (Ma Ro Beach) The Thai Red Cross Association's Khao Lan Center
Natural Attraction - Waterfall	Chanthaburi	Soi Dao	Khao Soi Dao Waterfall, Wildlife Reserve Khao Soi Dao
		Pong Nam Ron	Hin Dan Waterfall
	Trat	Muang	Ta Sen Waterfall Sa Pan Hin Waterfall
		Borai	Klong Kaew National Park Khao Saladdai Waterfall
Natural Attraction - Cave	Sa Kaeo	Khlong Yai	Phet Pho Thong Cave Khao Si Wa Cave Hat Sai Kaew Cave
	Chanthaburi	Pong Nam Ron	Khao Kaew Cave
Recreational Attraction	Sa Kaeo	Aranyaprathet	Ban Klong Luek Border Market or Rong Kluea Market Indo-Chinese Market
	Chanthaburi	Pong Nam Ron	Ban Pank Kard Major border crossing points Ban Laem Major border crossing points Viewpoint Spot Thailand and Cambodia Ban Hat Lek Border Market

5. Discussion

According to analysis of the sample, that is tourism attractions in those 3 provinces which are Taphraya District, Khok Sung District, Aranyaprathet District, and Khlong Hat District in Sa Kaeo province, Soi Dao District and Pong Nam Ron District in Chanthaburi province, Mueang District, Bo Rai District, and Khlong Yai District in Trat province, there are 3 potential tourism attractions for further development as follow:

Sa Kaeo Province, Khlong Hat District – Case study, Baan Khao Din Reservoir and Pilot project of Learning Center for Self-Sufficiency Economy of Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives (BAAC), Klonghad Sub-district. Based on field survey, Baan Khao Din is the border area, adjacent to Cambodia which contains a lot of land mines. Currently, Baan Khao Din is considered safe and can be developed to be tourism attraction in terms of career, community, and people development. Key concept is to promote integrated and sustainable network. Furthermore, this village also demonstrates knowledge and local wisdom from local specialists, creating uniqueness for this location in the future.

Chanthaburi Province, Soi Dao District – Case study, Baan Sabtaree exempted border crossing point, Toongkanan Sub-district. This area is the key exempted border point and product transportation route, opposite

to Baan Olamduan, Panompruek District, Battambang Province. This is the trading area for consumer products, used apparel. Along the way from Soi Dao District to Baan Sabtaree exempted border crossing point, there are a lot of longan gardens which can be developed to be tourism destinations where tourists can enjoy eating fruits or staying overnight.

Trat Province, Mueang District – Case study, Chamrak Battle viewpoint, Chamrak Sub-district. This area offer war tourism experience which tourists can study history of brave warriors who sacrificed their lives to ensure sovereignty of Thailand, and also history of Yuthakarn Baan Chamrak.

6. Conclusions

Base on field survey and data collection in 3 eastern border provinces, attractions are divided into 6 tourism categories which are eco-tourism, historical attraction, beach, waterfall, cave, recreational tourism. This shows that this area has the potential for tourism diversity and According to analysis of tourism the Potential Assessment of Tourism attraction can be defined as follows:

6.1 Famous destinations that meet all criteria of tourism attraction – 14 places

6.2 Famous destinations that meet some criteria of tourism attraction - 28 places

6.3 Destinations with potentials to be tourism attractions – 3 places

7. Recommendations

7.1 For further analysis, researcher should study potentials of communities which are not recently well known to promote awareness in the future and assessed the potential on various aspects like, employment generation, better standards of living, development of infrastructure facilities by collecting statistical figures.

7.2 Local organizations should formulate policy to develop potentials of tourism destinations and promote awareness.

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