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NIRAMOL PONGSATHAPORN : COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN TOURISM MANAGEMENT : A CASE STUDY OF THE PONG MANAO ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE IN TAMBON HUAY KHUN RAM, PHATTHANA NIKHOM DISTRICT, LOP BURI PROVINCE..

THESIS ADVISOR : ASST. PROF. MANEEWAN PEWNIM, Ph.D. 127 pp.

The research arises from the interests in impacts of tourism in Thailand. Previous studies revealed two major trends in the development of tourism management. First, intensive competition in tourist business results in improvement of basic infrastructures and integrated tourist services on tourist sites. Second, a shift toward sustainable tourism concept results in more emphasis on community participation in tourism management.

Adjustment of historical and archaeological tourist site management is different from other types of tourist sites because the Fine Arts Department is directly involved in policy planning and implementation of these sites. Their management has, in the past, been hampered by bureaucratic red tapes and regulations. However, with the shift toward more local involvement in policy and tourism management community participation are increasingly encouraged with more authority and budgets transferred to local bodies. The prehistoric archaeological site of Pong Manao is one such site that members of the local community have shown serious interest and involvement in its management from the beginning. This research aims to study patterns, characteristics, progresses, factors and limitations of local community participation in tourism management of Pong Manao Archaeological Site in terms of resource managements and administration after the site has been developed into a cultural and archaeological tourist site.

The research found that community participation in this site relied mostly on the work, both formal and informal, of various activity groups to support the development of the village into a tourist attraction site. The formal groups that have direct impact on the local tourism management are: the Archaeology and Nature Preservation Club of Huay Khun Ram in Lop Buri Province and the Youth Tour Guide group. The informal groups that are not directly involved in tourism management but whose activities indirectly support local tourism development are the Hemp Handicraft Groups. The main factors that influence the level of community members' participation in these groups are age, gender and occupation.

Problems and obstacles that hinder community participation in tourism management in Pong Manao Archaeological Site have been partially overcome by the local social systems of kinship, seniority, and mutual interdependence. The tasks of tourism management and administration of at Pong Manao are carried out through the sharing of work according to each member's competency and through the mutual agreement on the part of the Archaeology and Nature Preservation Club members..

Department of Anthropology, Graduate School, Silpakorn University. Academic Year: 2008

Student's signature

Thesis Advisor's signature