

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND

Thailand has experienced environmental problems such as air pollution, water pollution, garbage, congested communities and green area shortages which results in a low quality of life for Thai people. The Thai government realized these points and tried to develop the environment and quality of life of Thai people as seen in the 9<sup>th</sup> National Economic and social development plan (2002-2006). The plan adopts the philosophy of the sufficiency economy expounded by his Majesty the King. In the ninth plan, the main purpose focused on balanced development of human, social, economic and environmental resources to accomplish real sustainable people-centered development. Also, the 10<sup>th</sup> National Economic and social development plan (2007-2011) aiming to make Thailand a green and happy society in order to upgrade the quality of life for the Thai people. In order to reduce environmental problems in Thailand, the Thai government has increased the green areas around major cities, especially Bangkok, to cope with the people's stress and pollution problems.

Green areas or public parks are places where people use their leisure time to rest, relax from stress or do activities such as walking, running or exercising surrounded with service facilities, activities and beautiful nature without paying fees. Today t recreation parks provide the facilities such as parks, playgrounds, swimming pools, sport fields and community centers inside a park.

Public parks nowadays are taken care of by the Office of Public Parks, Department of the Environment. The Public Park Office provides 14 main public parks and more than 20 small parks around Bangkok. Some parks are popular with visitors and some of them are not. This research aims to study the factors attracting visitors to public parks: A case study of Wachirabenchatat Park or Suan Rotfai because there are three main public parks in the Chatuchak area; including Chatuchak Park, Suan Sirikit Park and Wachirabenchatat Park. Wachirabenchatat Park is more popular than the others although the location of the park is not as easy to access as

Chatuchak Park and Suan Sirikit Park. Therefore, the research is inspired by this point to study the factors of why people visit Wachirabenchatat Park.

Wachirabenchatat Park or Rotfai Park is located on Kampaengphet 3 Road, Ladyao Sub- district, Chatuchak District, Bangkok. It is a medium or district park covering the an area of 60 hectares. The government, led by Gen.Chartchai Choonhawan, realized the significance of environmental problems. In order to enhance the quality of life of citizens, the government decided to use land owned by the State Railways of Thailand (SRT). The first park was named Queen Sirikit Park but there was the 60 hectares left. Finally, the area of 60 hectares was transferred to use as a new park as a token of homage and honor to His Royal Highness Crown Prince *Maha Vajiralongkorn* on the occasion of His Fiftieth Birthday Anniversary on July 28, 2002. His Royal Highness Crown Prince *Maha Vajiralongkorn* renamed this park “*Wachirabenchatat Park*”. This park was made under a concept of a “family park”. Therefore, the park consists of various kinds of activities to attract the family members to visit and enjoy their leisure inside the park. They can enjoy activities such as cycling, playing sport, rowing kayak, camping, bird watching.

Moreover, this park has five attractive places that visitors need to visit as follows:

- 1) Picnic garden: This area covers an area of 0.64 hectares. It was built by PTT. SP., An area for outdoor cooking surrounded by beautiful scenery of green lawns, fountains and flora.
- 2) Sports Ground: This area offer the visitors who like playing sport activities such as football, basketball and peanque
- 3) Bangkok butterfly garden and insectarium: It is a learning center of butterfly and insect life. It was built in a dome shape. The visitors can enjoy watching and taking photos of many kinds of butterflies and insects with colorful flowers inside the dome.
- 4) Rotfai Park community recreation: This area is suitable for activities within the family, especially children because this area consists of a swimming pool, children’s playground with 15 types of playground equipment. Children can enjoy with cool mist from the fog sprays that the park provides

5) Camp ground: Rotfai Park also offer the opportunities for people to experience outdoor camping or social life outside the home.

In addition, Wachirabenchatat Park has the highlight points to visit such as the tallest fountain in Thailand, cycling rally for bird watching and sculptures of children gestures. Opening hours of the park is daily from 5.00 a.m. to 9.00 p.m. There is no entrance fee.

Public park office, Department of Environment. *Wachiranbenchatat Park (Rotfai Park)*. Retrieved August 15, 2008, from [http://203.155.220.217/office/ppdd/publicpark/thai/mainpark/T\\_rotfai.html](http://203.155.220.217/office/ppdd/publicpark/thai/mainpark/T_rotfai.html)

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

City society leads people to face many social problems both physical and mental. So that the quality of life can be improved, the recreation park is one way to cope with stress and environmental problems. Many public parks in Thailand need to use these strategies for development in order to respond to the need of people, create a good environment for cities and attract more people. Therefore, this study needs to investigate the factors attracting the visitors to visit Wachirabenchatat Park. The research questions are as follows:

### **1.2.1 Main Question**

What attracts visitors to Wachirabenchatat Park ?

### **1.2.2 Sub-questions**

- 1) What are the characteristics of visitors to Wachirabenchatat Park ?
- 2) To what degree do the attractions attract visitors to Wachirabenchatat Park?
- 3) What are the problems and suggestions for park improvement?

## **1.3 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

The objectives of this study are the following:

### 1.3.1 Main Objective

To find out what attracts visitors to Wachirabenchatat Park

### 1.3.2 Sub-objective

- 1) To investigate the characteristics of visitors visiting Wachirabenchatat Park
- 2) To find out the degree of attractions with services, facilities, activities and scenery of Wachirabenchatat Park
- 3) To indicate the problems and suggestions for park improvement.

## 1.4 VARIABLES AND DEFINITIONS

This research aims to study the factors attracting visitors to Wachirabenchatat Park in terms of the degree of attraction such as services, facilities, activities and scenery.

*Figure 1.* Framework of the study shows the relationship between independent variables and dependent variables.

### 1.4.1 Variables

#### Independent variables

<p><b>Personal Data</b>  Gender  Age  Education  Occupation  Income  Living area</p>
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#### Dependent Variable

<p><b>The degree of attractions of Wachirabenchatat Park</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Services</li> <li>- Facilities</li> <li>- Activities</li> <li>- Scenery</li> </ul>
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### 1.4.2 Definitions

The definitions of terms of this study are as follows:

**Visitors to Wachirabenchatat park** refer to people who visit Wachirabenchatat park on weekends during the period January 2-4, 2009.

**Attractions to Wachirabenchatat Park** refer to the level of attraction in four areas : services, facilities, activities and scenery

**Attractions to services** is the feeling about the services in Wachirabenchatat Park in terms of service period, park staff service, security service, park maintenance service, and the like.

**Attractions to facilities** is the feeling about the facilities in Wachirabenchatat Park in terms of sport area, parking lots, restaurant, toilet, public telephone, sport equipment, and the like.

**Attractions to activities** is the feeling about the activities in Wachirabenchatat Park in terms of picnic activity, outdoor sports, bicycling and kayaking, swimming and playing in the playground, camping and bird watching

**Attractions to scenery** is the feeling of interest in the scenery in Wachirabenchatat park in terms of the size of the park, the beauty of the trees and flowers, the peacefulness of the park and the like.

### **1.4.3 Hypothesis**

The hypotheses in this study are as follows:

- Hypothesis 1: There will be differences in factors attracting male and female visitors to Wachirabenchatat Park.
- Hypothesis 2: Older visitors are more attracted by the attractions of Wachirabenchatat Park than younger visitors.
- Hypothesis 3: Visitors with a lower education are more attracted by attractions of Wachirabenchatat Park than those with a higher education.

## **1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

This study is limited to the visitors who visited Wachirabenchatat Park on holidays during the period January 2-4, 2009. The instrument is an open-ended and closed-ended questionnaire to survey the factors attracting visitors to Wachirabenchatat Park. The questionnaire relates to personal data, the characteristic

of visitors to Wachirabenchatat Park, the degree of attractions to the park in terms of service, facilities, activities and scenery, and problems and suggestions.

## **1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

1.6.1 The result of this study will identify factors attracting visitors to the park and the level of attractions to the park in order to understand visitor needs.

1.6.2 The result of this study will reveal the problems and suggestions so that the Office of the Public Parks, Department of Environment can develop and improve the attractions in terms of services, facilities, activities and scenery in the park

1.6.3 This model of evaluation can be applied to other public parks.

## **1.7 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY**

The study of factors attracting visitors to Wachirabenchatat Park in this paper is divided into five chapters. The first chapter consists of background, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, scope of the study, variables and definitions, significance of the study and organization of the study. Chapter two relates to the review of literature regarding the research topic. The third chapter describes the methodology which is the subjects, materials, procedures, and data analysis. Chapter four presents the findings of the study. The last chapter comprises conclusions, discussion and recommendations for further study.