

Abstract

Title : Ecotourism As Viewed By People In Ban Sa Ngo, Tambon
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This research was conducted with the following objectives: (1) to study the socio-economic characteristics of the residents of Ban Sa Ngo; (2) to determine the attitude of the Ban Sa Ngo residents towards ecotourism; and, (3) to identify the problems and obstacles of prospective development of Ban Sa Ngo community as a potential sustainable ecotourism area. Respondents for this study consisted of 187 randomly selected Ban Sa Ngo residents. Data collection tools included questionnaire/interview method and statistical analysis of data gathered was done using the software package program for social science research (SSPC).

Results of the study regarding the socio-economic characteristics of Ban Sa Ngo residents showed that most of the respondents were male and had not finish their elementary education; had an average age of 36 years; a majority were already married; had average annual income of 14,042 baht; average number of household members was 5; and, had an average of 2 household members working as farm labor; owned an average of 5 rai; most of

the respondents were indulged in agriculture as their occupation which was either upland rice farming and poultry production. Most of the respondents indicated hired labor as the minor occupation. A majority of the respondents indicated that they received information on agriculture, politics and tourism mostly from television programs.

On the attitude of the Ban Sa Ngo residents towards ecotourism, the study showed that most of the respondents had a more positive level of attitude towards ecotourism in four aspects of ecotourism, namely: (1) conservation of the natural environment; (2) conservation of the culture and traditions; (3) benefits for the community; and (4) study of the environment, where the attitude of the residents on the concept of ecotourism was more accurate and more towards a sustainable direction.

As for the problems and obstacles, the study showed that if in the future, Ban Sa Ngo community would be sustainably developed as a potential tourist area, most of the respondents indicated that this development would encounter no problems and obstacles. Aside from this, most of the respondents also agreed that Ban Sa Ngo community has the need to be developed soon as a potential tourist area and they were prepared to participate in all aspects of development. But the study showed that the problems were more personal since most of the respondents lack the basic knowledge (having been unable to finish primary schooling) and also the problem towards necessary infrastructures as indicated by the poor conditions of the main road that leads towards the community, slow communications and the lack of sufficient water for consumption during the dry season. These were the obstacles which the people of Ban Sa Ngo hoped the related government agencies would provide more responsibility in developing in order to solve the problems.