

Independent Study : The Impacts of Trekking Tours : A Case Study
of Mae Cham District, Chiang Mai Province

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Abstract

The objectives of this independent study are focused at learning about the prevailing situations and the effects of trekking tours in Mae Cham district, Chiang Mai province, including learning about the roles and responsibilities of public and private sectors on the issues of trekking tours. The aim is to find out the most appropriate format of trekking tour management which suits the needs of tourists and has the least effects on local social and environmental conditions.

The methodology of the study is field interviews. Respondents are divided into 5 groups which are: government officials, trekking tour companies, trekking tourists, provincial level policy makers and people who live in trekking localities. Data and information from other sources are also used in this study which is carried out in Mae Cham district, Chiang Mai province during January to September 1993.

The study finds that the demand for trekking tour has the tendency to increase with every passing year owing to its popularity among Thai and foreign tourists who love natural beauty, local culture and adventure.

The beneficial effect of trekking tour is the opportunity of local residents to earn extra income from tourism. But, there are numerous ensuing bad effects on society and culture, on the decays of natural resources and environments such as poaching, garbage disposal and causes of forest fire. These shortcomings stem from the lack of control over the setting of trekking itinerary including the lack of rules and regulations on trekking tour. Moreover, there is the lack of trekking policy both at provincial and national levels.

The study has the following recommendations :

1. national and provincial policies on management of trekking tours should be formulated.
2. trekking itinerary should be clearly specified in order to supervise and service, such as, in providing safety and conveniences.
3. campaigns on the preservation of natural resources and environment should be provided to local residents, tourists and trekking tour companies.
4. data and information concerning trekking tours should be gathered for the use of future official policy formulation.