

ABSTRACT

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A STUDY OF BANPONG CULTURAL COMMUNITY FOR AGRO-ECOTOURISM ACTIVITIES, TAMBON PAPAI, AMPHUR SANSAI, CHANGWAT CHIANGMAI

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This study aimed at 1) finding out some cultures of the folks in Banpong community crucial to tourism activities; and 2) investigating readiness of Banpong community in agro-ecotourism activity participation. This participative action research consisted of two steps of data gathering. First the researcher approached the village leader and asked him to help single out twelve figures consisting of elders and those respected by the village's folks and have lived in Banpong community for a certain period of time. Structural interview was applied; asking, talking about the history of cultures rendered down from generation to generation were made in order to create a joint agreement upon the cultural verification and analysis. Secondly, the researcher asked the village leader to call 35 folk leaders, who acted as the representatives of the whole folk, through stratified random sampling for the meeting. The AIC technique, one of techniques of group process, was applied as brain storming;

the community's cultural problems derived from the first stage of data gathering were jointly analyzed. Consequently, the verification made on the cultures was confirmed and the Banpong community's readiness in agro-ecotourism activity participation was investigated.

The research results were divided into two parts. The first part was focused upon the community history and the cultures crucial to tourism activities. It was found that the community was originally founded by the people of Shan state and eventually came the people of Chiang Mai. The community itself had beautiful scenery. Their primitive way of living was worth studying. The cultures were of five groups : 1) arts: language, local music, Tan Pharpa Luang temple with legends and Dhama scripts worth investigating; 2) community aspects: festivities of Songkran, Rod Nam Dum Hua, Ho Pong Shrine Respect Paying, Buddhist Lent; 3) craft: basket weaving, tools as well as museum of Banpong's cultures and agricultural practices; 4) sport and recreation: cock fighting and horned-insect fighting; and 5) home-economic aspects: occupations, local foods, herbs, herbal medicine, residence, daily life. The second part was community cultures and readiness for tourism activities. It was found that the community cultures have been witnessed till nowadays. The folks were glad to welcome tourists wishing to expose themselves to their way of living. According to the 9 meetings with those community's outstanding figures, it was found that economic problem was unanimously agreed upon as the community's problem; agro-ecotourism was picked up as an alternative solution to the problem. The Banpong Ecotourism Club was set up and regulations were established for practices. Therefore, Banpong community had both natural and cultural resources as well as human resources to carry out ecotourism business in a certain extent since the folks lacked experience and knowledge of tourism practices. Thus, relevant agencies should provide assistance to Banpong community to enable them to be well -prepared for efficient practices.