

COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM MODEL OF OTOP VILLAGE CHAMPION (OVC) A CASE STUDY OF BAN NGAO COMMUNITY, RANONG PROVINCE.

Supattra Pranee*, Jiraporn Boonying & Pannalin Suhookorn*****

*College of Innovation and Management, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University,
Bangkok, Thailand*

*E-Mail: *supattra.pr@ssru.ac.th, **jiraporn.bo@ssru.ac.th, ***pannalin.su@ssru.ac.th*

ABSTRACT

The findings from the community-based tourism model of OTOP village champion: OVC, a case study of Ban Ngao Community, Ranong Province revealed that it was a unification of strength of the community for creative initiation to develop the community's resources for value added, create works, generate income as well as attract tourists to visit for learning community lifestyle through promotion of the community-based tourism in which people in a community can accommodate with tourists' demand while allowing revenue generated by tourism. In the meantime, tourists can gain authentic experience of warm welcome and impressive services in connection with community's local wisdom, culture, lifestyle based on participation of all concerned parties which helps enhance a sustainable strength and generate inclusive income gain. To sustainably strengthen the community, the development process of OTOP products was applied in parallel with tourist attraction development to promote an initiative creation of the community under 4P principles; P: Place or tourist attraction aspect – having potential to be developed as a tourist attraction such as Wat Ban Ngao, P: Product or product development aspect – having unique OTOP products such as cashew nuts or Kayoo cashew nuts which are the well-known products, P: People or community aspect – people's participation has been strongly made, P: Preserve or preservation aspect – local identity can be conserved excellently and appropriately.

Keywords: OTOP Village Champion, One Tambon One Product (OTOP), Ban Ngao Community

INTRODUCTION

Tourism has become as a tool on which the government places importance since it plays a vital role of numerously generating income for country development and as the leading source of revenues of the country which are apparently distributed to many regions i.e. travel, accommodation, souvenir purchase, restaurant, shops leading to more expansion of businesses relevant to tourism both directly and indirectly i.e. an increase of accommodation, both 5-star and 4-star hotels including rural accommodation or so-called homestay, an increase of restaurants and other service providers to attract both domestic and international tourists. This captioned expansions through nearly all regions of Thailand form alertness among local people realizing that it is an easy way to earn more income from tourism.

As per the current situation, it is found that the group of OTOP producers and tourism entrepreneurs have not clearly operated their works together but in different direction, no tangible and proper network due to mainly focusing on mass production whereas there has not been diversified channels of distribution. Nevertheless, due to having a large number of OTOP products remained in stock and OTOP producers have a concern how to handle this

problem and how to make their OTOP ones to be so attractive for tourists to buy and bring back home as souvenirs from Thailand.

“Ranong” is one of the southern provinces, located on the west coast along the Andaman sea, with quite beaches and small & large islands as favorite places of tourists. With road linkage to other nearby provinces and diversified tourism potential, Ranong has both natural and man-made tourism resources, historical & cultural attractions as well as well-known mineral water resources. Furthermore, Ranong’s provincial strategy has been determined to develop the province to become the city of health tourism with direction of development such as launching tourism promotion activities, continually publicizing tourism information via various medias, promoting qualified souvenir & gift production, etc. Ranong’s tourism development and promotion, therefore, is the essential element to contribute more revenue to local communities which will further hold drive both Thailand and Ranong economy as well.

This study on the community-based tourism model of OTOP Village Champion: OVC, a case study of Ban Ngao Village, Ban Ngao Subdistrict, Ngao District, Ranong Province, was conducted to encourage and promote the community participation to strengthen the tourism community to create income gain for the whole community and also to be in line with the current government’s tourism policy.

OBJECTIVE

To examine the community-based tourism of OTOP village champion in Ban Ngao Community, Ranong Province.

METHODOLOGY

This study is a qualitative research in which data collection was mainly gained from representatives of villages/community/experts and academics, totally 20 persons, consisting of representatives from villages/community/OTOP producers, the Department of Tourism, OTOP producers, Subdistrict Administrative Organizations and Provincial Administrative Organization, and academics. The data collection was conducted by the research tools consisting of 1) an interview form to explore in-depth information regarding details of tourist attractions, tourism model and OTOP products in compliance with tourist attractions and the conceptual framework of OTOP Village Champion: OVC Project, and 2) a focus group discussion participated by invited entrepreneurs and authorities concerned with OVC; representatives from the Department of Tourism, villages and community, OTOP producers and sellers in the captioned community, Subdistrict Administrative Organizations and Provincial Administrative Organization and academics.

RESULTS

The research findings reveal that the community-based tourism of OVC in Ban Ngao Community, Ranong Province is the unification of strength of the community for creative initiation to develop and add value to the community resources, create works, generate income for community people and be capable of attracting tourists to visit and learn people’s lifestyle through promotion of the community based tourism in which the community people can accommodate with tourists’ demand while allowing revenue generated by tourism. Tourists can gain authentic experience of warm welcome and impressive services in connection with community’s local wisdom, culture, lifestyle based on participation of all concerned parties in order to enhance a sustainable strength and generate inclusive income

gain. To sustainably strengthen the community, the development process of OTOP products was applied in parallel with tourist attraction development to promote an initiative creation of the community under 4P principles; P: Place or tourist attraction aspect – having potential to be developed as a tourist attraction such as Wat Ban Ngao, P: Product or product development aspect – having unique OTOP products, P: People or community aspect – people’s participation has been strongly made in OTOP village development, P: Preserve or preservation aspect – local identity can be conserved excellently and appropriately as details of the research findings shown as follows:

BAN NGAO VILLAGE BACKGROUND

Ban Ngao Community is located at Ngao Village, Moo 1, Mueang Ranong District, Ranong Province. The word “Ngao” has been told that it was the name of “bison” or “Ngo” in Chinese. In the old days, Ngao meant a large field having a great number of grazers especially bisons. Back to the past when Phraya Damrong Sutcharit Mahisara Phakdee (Cor Su Jiang) pioneered the land for mining, there were many people relocating in this captioned area causing the field to be called “Ngo Field” or the field of bisons and it was later distorted to “Ngao Field”. In this captioned field, the number of living people has increased continually and in 1911, since Siam Syntigrade Co., Ltd. obtained the mining license of cassiterite in this field, it was then upgraded to be a subdistrict called “Ngao Subdistrict”.

Later, some parts of Ngao Subdistrict which are crowded of population or economic zone was established to be Ngao Sanitary District, Mueang Ranong District, Ranong Province, by the announcement of the Ministry of Interior on November 1, 1973 and a result from the *Thesaban* Act (upgrading a sanitary district to be a municipality) in 1999, all sanitary districts throughout Thailand were upgraded to be subdistrict municipal offices. Ngao Sanitary District has therefore become Ngao Subdistrict Municipal District since May 25, 1999.

LOCATION AND TERRITORY

Start from the shrine of the city god of Ranong Province and then enter through the highway no. 4 and go straight to Ngao Subdistrict which is 15.1 kilometers far from Muang District. Ngao Community is in Mueang Ranong District, Ranong Province having geographical area of piedmont plateaus of approx. 83,571 rais or around 133 sq. kilometers with 6,419 numbers of population (Civil Registration of Muang District Office, Ranong Province, 2016).

Territory

North	connected to Bang Rin and Pak Nam Subdistricts, Muang Ranong District
South	connected to Moo 2 and Ratchagrood Subdistrict, Muang Ranong District
East	connected to Had Sompan Subdistrict, Mueang Ranong District and Chumphon Province
West	connected to Moo 4 and Pak Nam/Koh Phayam Subdistricts, Mueang Ranong District

Tourist Attractions

Wat Ban Ngao or Ban Ngao Temple is located in Ban Ngao Subdistrict, Mueang Ranong District, Ranong Province adjacent to Phu Khao Ya Ranong. This area was originally a residence for pilgrim monks and upon visiting of Luang Phor Kiad, a monk from Pattani coming for pilgrimage, people living in this area, with their admiration towards this monk,

had cooperated in building a temple in B.E. 2530 for him to permanently stay. Currently, this temple was presided by Phra Kru Prachak Sutasarn as an abbot who has been a developer establishing many permanent structures i.e. new large and elegant 2-storey ubosot (chapel) or so-called sky-high ubosot having 8 meters width and 15 meters length, with a large concrete court surrounded with iron bars, having a 4-square building at each corner with a stair in each corner; north, south, east and west. The ground floor of the ubosot is an ordination hall and within the ubosot, it has been enshrined by the attitude of subduing Mara or “Luang Phor Dee Book” or officially called “Phra Tipuka Budha Maha Sakayamuni Srirang” meaning “the big tin Buddha statue which is the auspiciousness and pride of Muang Ranong”, and also the beautiful design of crafted wall.

Wat Ban Ngao has 3 well-known tourist attractions; 1) Wang Majcha, 2) new ubosot, and 3) the big tin Buddha statue as details shown in the Picture 1 below.



Picture 1: The Naga Stairs to get on the ubosot
Source: <https://www.angeltourthailand.com>



Picture 2: The Big Tin Buddha Statue
Source: The researcher

Apart from the abovementioned, there has been also a local museum established in this temple where many utensils used in the past and present have been collected and preserved as a legacy for further study and exploration of new generations and also a Wang Matcha Aquatic Park keeping various kinds of fresh-water fish where tourists can closely

give food and over 300-step concrete stairs by which tourists can walk up to the top of the mountain, developed as a cultural attraction, to see 360° panoramic view overlooking Ranong city as shown in the Picture 3 - 4.



Picture 3: Local Museum



Picture 4: Wang Matcha Aquatic Park

In addition, another attraction close to Wat Ban Ngao is Nam Tok Ngao (waterfall) National Park in which tourists can take a highway through forest to the waterfall, an elegant scenery destination, located at No. 76/5, Moo 1, Mueang Ranong District, Ranong Province, daily opening since 08.30 hrs., Telephone number: 077-810 651.

OTOP CENTER

Not only be one of the national and provincial significant Dharma sources, Ngao Community located at Ngao Subdistrict, Mueang Ranong District, Ranong Province, is also a source of qualified OTOP producer and distributor of the product type: Food – 5 Stars Ranong Cashew Nuts (for the year 2004) produced and distributed by Mrs. Nareerat Ta-Cho, address: No. 218/12, Moo 2, Ban Ngao, Petchakasem Road, Ngao Subdistrict, Mueang Ranong District, Ranong Province, 85000, Telephone number: 08-6281-7091, 0-7782-3745



Picture 5: Ban Ngao Well-Known OTOP Cashew Nuts

The souvenir shops are another check-in point of tourists from everywhere visiting Ranong Province to stopover for buying local products as souvenirs and the popular one is the roasted Kayu (roasted cashew nuts) whereas there are also many other OTOP products such as dried seafood, Ranong local desserts and others which are don't- miss items of tourists visiting to Ban Ngao Community where they can buy all popular souvenirs of Ranong.



Picture 6: Other OTOP Products i.e. dried seafood

REST AREA FOR DINNING

In Ban Ngao Community, there are many restaurants i.e. Suan Aharn View at 65/1 near entering way of Wat Ban Ngao, Petchkasem Road, Ban Ngao Subdistrict, Muang District, Ranong Province, opening between 11.00-22.00 hrs. and telephone number: 0 7784 8525, 08 1719 5911, a local restaurant serving local original menus with delicious flavor, which is a recommended one for tourists having an opportunity to visit Ranong and its popular menus are ; papaya salad, ground pork salad, vermicelli salad, hot and sour seafood soup, fried fish with mixed herbs, etc.



Picture 7: Suan Aharn View Restaurant Serving Local Food Menus of Ban Ngao

Roti Nisra (southern flat bread) is another rest area, serving halal food, located at Ban Ngao Community market on the entering road to Mu Ko Ranong National Park, whose popular menus are; roti and beef curry, a fresh crispy roti to be eaten with beef or chicken curry. Moreover, fried chicken menu is also another popular and extensively recommended one of Ranong. This shop opens between 08.00-13.00 hrs. and telephone no.: 08 6574 4324, 0 7782 1415.



Picture 8: Roti Nisra – Halal Food

ACCOMMODATION, HOMESTAY

Tourists visiting Ban Ngao Community is recommended to rest at homestays in Nam Tok Ngao National Park at 65/5, Moo 1, Ban Ngao Subdistrict, Mueang Ranong District, Ranong Province, Telephone no. 0 77810 651 serving 10 rooms with fan and air-conditioned at the room rate of Baht 600-900 per night or use rented tent service with service charge of Baht 150-350 per night.



Picture 9: Homestays in Nam Tok Ngao National Park

In case tourists prefer to stay with peaceful environment and close to dharma source, they can stay at homestays in Wat Ban Ngao which is really quiet providing an accommodation for tourists or merit - making visitors with room charge paid as much as they can for utility expenses, Telephone no.: 0 89671 6930, 086-476 2448.

CALENDAR OF SIGNIFICANT TRADITIONAL ACTIVITY ARRANGEMENT

Tak Bat Devo Festival (give food offerings to Buddhist monks) of Wat Ban Ngao is a significant annual activity to inherit Thai tradition and culture and preserve Tak Bat Devo activity through encouraging people the sense of national culture and national identity. In each year, all communities have participated in the activity arrangement i.e. activity reflecting local lifestyle in the past; Wat Ban Ngao's Tak Bat Devo having unique and characteristic style in which the parade, led by a movable throne of the Buddha statute, of

monks, novices and people usually consisting of many movie stars, singers or beauty queens in god and goddess costumes, descent the 343 steps of the hill stairs to join the huge crowd below and receive food and flowers offerings. This activity in Wat Ban Ngao has been annually organized on the next day of Buddhist Lent and presided by Ranong Governor and joined by both Thai and Myanmar Buddhists.

Another attraction of Ban Ngao Community is the cultural walking street market fair held along the road in front of Ban Ngao Municipal District hosted by Ban Ngao Mayor, heads of state agencies and local people to stimulate Ranong' s cultural tourism economy, promote tourism, generate income and encourage participation among government, private and public sectors in view of conservation and inheriting of cultural arts and local wisdom. The activities consist of cultural products fair and cultural arts presentation which are normally held on every Sunday.



Picture 10: Cultural Walking Street Market Fair of Ban Ngao Community
Source: The researcher

Ban Ngao Community is a peaceful one in which most of people living there are ethnic Thai-Chinese and merchants serving their services with smile and generosity especially towards new comers and tourists. Their shops serving products at very low cost are located near tourist attractions; therefore, visiting tourists can also have sightseeing of Nam Tok Ngao National Park, Phu Khao Ya and Wat Ban Ngao where local people and tourists pay respect to the Buddha statue for mercy. The community is also near Ranong' s farm outlet, the market of cashew nuts and processed agricultural products of local people including well-known Kayu water production. This community thereby contains a comprehensive characteristic according to the concept of a commercial unique and community identity as established by the Ministry of Commerce.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The community-based tourism management of OVC has been conducted based on the principle of 4P consisting of P : Place or tourist attraction aspect - Ban Ngao Village has its potential to be developed as a tourist attraction since there are many attractive unique destinations i.e. the elegance of the tin Buddha statue, Wang Matcha Aquatic Park having

various kinds of fresh fish by which tourists can enjoy fish feeding, a local museum displaying a variety of utensils used in the past until present which is a tourist's learning source, in line with the study of Supattra Pranee (2019) on "Community-Based Tourism Model of OTOP Village Champion (OVC): A Case Study of Hat Sompan Village, Ranong Province" in view of P or product development aspect ; in other word, Ban Ngao Village has a well-known unique OTOP product, the cashew nut which is a local fruit processed to be an outstanding OTOP product of the village as well as various types of seafood which is in line with the study of Eknarong Worasiha (2018) on "The Travelling Route for Gastronomic Tourism via Salt in the Western Region of Thailand" revealing that each province of Thailand has its uniqueness and characteristics that can be applied to be as a tourist attraction. In addition, the identity of food culture varied in each province can be associated with its existing tourist attractions to design an improvement of tourism model, P: People – community aspect, participation of people in the community has been rendered for development representing through conservation and preservation of cultural arts in the tourist attraction such as Wat Ban Ngao which is in line with the study of Atchara Srilachai and Phukrerk Buasorn (2018) on "Guidelines for Sustainable Tourism Management for Community-Based Tourism" revealing that the community has its potential to manage tourism with readiness of learning center establishment and tourist attractions and also in line with the study of Pithoon Thongchim (2014) on "Tourism Cooperation Management by Lanta Island Community in Krabi Province" revealing that the tourism cooperation between the government and private sectors has been properly made with benefits to the community whereas the community leader also plays a vital role for tourism management and in line with the study of Natthaporn Dokboonnak and Thapakorn Thongkhamnuch (2013) revealing that the community participation reflected the highest result in tourism management especially for P: Preserve or preservation aspect – the local identity could be preserved by applying the sufficiency economy philosophy as a way of life, Had Sompan people participated in significant traditional festival conservation; Had Sompan annual festivals i.e. the Ceremony of Covering Saffron Colored Sashes on the Stupa enshrined with the Buddha's relics held once a year, Celebration of Luang Phor Khlai Statue held 3 times a year and Worship Ceremony of Phor Ta Luang Kaew held once a year which is in line with the research of Suthee Sert-Sri (2014) on "Guidelines of Tourism Development and Management for Khlong Khone Community" placing an importance on conservation of mangrove forest of the community by educating the local people to be aware of forest conservation and also apply the sufficiency economy philosophy for their living.

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