The purpose of this paper is to describe the potential, problems, obstacles and suggestions for the enhancement of community-based health tourism potential of Ban Thung Pradu, Thap Sakae District, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province. Based on the summaries of this study finding, participation of the community-based health tourism group has very high potential for tourism activities, areas, conservation and preservation of value; management have high potential; but some of the facilities such as the number of restaurants, souvenir shops, accommodation, meaning and symbol system, internet services, advertising and public management have moderate potential. With the assistance from fund agency, the public and private organizations, governmental officials in the area, entrepreneurs and tourism group should plan to support the development of the various facilities, including a viewpoint or a highlight for the tourist attractions and a local wisdom and community for identity product. In addition, they place should be more emphasis on advertising and public relations tourism activities and making more connection of health tourism partner network.

Keywords: community-based health tourism, potential of tourism, tourism resources

Introduction

Tourism is one of the influential economic industries in many countries of the world. So each country has to try and bring out its existing potential uniqueness and to create added values for their tourism products. Development of tourism industry with an abundance of fine attractions, natural destinations, architectural wonders, heritage sites and established arts and cultures as a result more tourists.

The tourist’s behavior has a tendency to travel in a natural environment learning by traveling to increase the experience of accessing local lifestyles, local cultures, and health promotion tourism activities. Thailand is the country in Southeast Asia, which has preserved and nurtured its culture, history, architecture, and traditional way of living. The Tourism Authority of Thailand (2018) expects to expand Thailand’s tourism industry, in 2019, including health and medical tourism, with at least 10% growth in revenue from 2018, reaching 3.4 trillion THB in revenue.

There are beautiful facilities for therapy services and alternative medicine services for health promotion and disease prevention at the community level. The health tourism is a trip to visit natural and cultural tourist attractions, which is a promoting and preserving health and the environment tourism activities, such as Thai Massage therapy, mineral water bath, sea salt spa sand spa aroma essential oil therapy and pesticide residue free food, etc. From the promotion of government agencies and private sector, the health tourism activities are growing rapidly. Foreign tourists, including the tourists who use health services in Thailand, such as dental surgery, other cosmetic surgery as well as diseases treatment in hospital and
the health tourists who have not illness but have a desire to travel in the beautiful natural places and the worth learning local culture are popular and greatly increased.

As far as the health tourism activities that operated by the region businesses are still concentrated in Bangkok and major tourist destinations such as Phuket, Pattaya and Chiang Mai. However, the government policy make the community-based tourism distribution in various provinces and must be based on local resources and organized the local activities that created awareness and enhance the experience for tourists and give benefits and improve the quality of life of people in the community.

For that reason, Thailand has set a Tourism Strategy plan in 2015-2017 that aims to become a leader in health tourism in the region (The Royal Coast Area of the Gulf of Thailand) with a coastal development from Samut Sakhon, Samut Songkhram, Phetchaburi and Prachuap Khiri Khan Province to be an important tourist attraction to accommodate tourists with car routes, railway and natural resources including beaches, mountains, forest and waterfalls. Prachuap Khiri Khan Province is the province not far from Bangkok, an important source of cultural and historical sites, the famous beautiful low slope white sandy beaches along 8 districts, including many activities for tourists.

Ban Thung Pradu, Thap Sakae District is a community that is ready to be a health tourism destination, such as sand spa activities at a quiet beach to promote health and relaxation, local fishing and nature conservation activities, organic vegetables and learning activities saving from toxins, and meditation practice.

Therefore, the study of the potential of health tourism resources is an important part to be used in community-based tourism development of Ban Thung Pradu, Thap Sakae District, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province to be standardized and achieve sustainability.

**Literature Review**

**Definition of Tourism**

Tourism is defined by as follows:

Tourism is a collection of activities, services and industries which deliver a travel experience comprising transportation, accommodation, eating and drinking establishments, retail shops entertainment businesses and hospitality services provided for individuals or groups traveling away from home (G. Feuler, 1905). UNWTO defined tourism comprising the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited. Tourism is different from travel. In order for tourism to happen, there must be a displacement: an individual has to travel, using any type of means of transportation (he might even travel on foot: nowadays, it is often the case for poorer societies, and happens even in more developed ones, and concerns pilgrims, hikers). But all travel is not tourism (G.M. Korres, 2008).

**Health Tourism**

Health tourism is a wider term for travel that focuses on medical treatment that focuses on medical treatments and the use of healthcare services (Wikipedia, 2019). Goodrich (1993) has defined health tourism as the deliberate attempt on the part of a tourist facility or destination to attract tourists by promoting healthcare services and facilities in addition to regular tourist amenities. Loverseed (1998) stated that health tourism encompasses those
products and services are designed to promote and enable their customers to improve and maintain their health through a combination of leisure, recreational and educational activities in location removed from the distraction of work and home.

The World Tourism Organization has defined health tourism as a niche has emerged and has rapidly grown to become an industry where people travel long distances to other countries to obtain medical, dental and surgical care while simultaneously having a holiday (Cornell, 2006). Ranee (2017) stated that health tourism may be divided into two categories: 1) Health healing tourism: travelling to receive medical treatment in specialized institutes jointly with tourism programs to leisure, recreational and 2) Health promotion tourism: travelling to promote and enable their customers to improve and maintain their health through a combination of leisure, recreational and educational activities in location.

**Community-Based Tourism**

As the potential of tourism to contribute towards sustainable development is increasingly recognized in Thailand, ASEAN and globally, now is an ideal time to review the direction, successes and challenges of CBT in Thailand, so that lessons learned can benefit local communities, development practitioners and tourism industry stakeholders. The community-based enterprise, particularly home stay community based tourism, is widely recognized as one of the major players in contributing to sustainable development of Thailand. Therefore, the establishment and success of the home stay community based tourism are highly needed by the Thai community.

The social changes that brought on by globalization and the influence of Mass-Consumerism are supported by sustainable development in The United Nations, international institutions and academics and conservationists. Tourism is one way to bring local people of different backgrounds together. Ideally, tourism seems to offer hosts and visitors a unique opportunity to share their different cultures and point-of-view. Members of different societies are due to share first-hand experiences together and to develop personal relationships which can grow into powerful alliance contributing towards the sustainable development of society. Community-Based Tourism (CBT) is tourism in which local residents invite tourists to visit their community with the provision of overnight accommodation.

CBT enables the tourist to discover local habitats and wildlife, and celebrates and respects traditional cultures, rituals and wisdom. It is managed and owned by the community, for the community, with the purpose of enabling visitors to increase their awareness and learn about the community and local ways of life. The community will be aware of the commercial and social value placed on their natural and cultural heritage through tourism.

**Methodology**

The study adopts mixed research. The qualitative data have been concerned to generate the idea and related literature collected from various governmental agencies and offices, office of tourism board, websites and various informative resources such as books, reports, articles and research papers, etc. and collected from secondary data in the field by conducting in-depth interviews with 11 entrepreneurs, public sector represents and community leaders in Ban Thung Pradu Community, Thap Sakae District and government officials. The quantitative data were collected from assessment of tourism potential questionnaires distributed to 15 researchers, entrepreneurs, people in the community and
government officials involved in tourism in Ban Thung Pradu Community, Thap Sakae District, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province.

The data collection in the field by using the following instruments. 1) Surveying and collecting data from documents about tourist attractions in the community, provincial development plans and basic information, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province tourism strategy plan. 2) Using the potential assessment form for assessing potential resources in the area. 3) Using the tourism management policy and problem in the development of tourist attractions potential interview form with the researchers and the stakeholders in community. The document, survey and the 39 indicators of potential assessment data were synthesized and analyzed by using descriptive methods.

Results

The study of the potential of community-based health tourism: case study of Ban Thung Pradu, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province. The researcher summarized the results according to the following objectives.

1. The government tourism policy in the area found that: the national strategic framework of 20 years “Thailand will be the top quality tourist destination in the world that grows on the basis of being Thai in order to promote sustainable economic and social development and distribute income to people in all sectors”. The development strategy of the Royal Coast Tourism Development Zone (2016-2020) aims to focus on the tourism resource base on the term of social, cultural, environmental, human capital and service quality to develop into a world-class leisure city; and the tourism development of Prachuap Khiri Khan Provincial Plan (revised edition) 1918-1923 aims to develop Prachuap Khiri Khan Province to be a tourist city based on the unique identity of community.

2. The tourism resources in Ban Thung Pradu community are the following: 1) The Thung Pradu temple, fishing village, organic agriculture and Thap Sakae beach sand spa which are the tourist attractions for community-based health tourism that considered sustainability of the environment, society and culture and health promotion. 2) The tourist facilities as toilets, resting place, accommodations, restaurants, souvenir shops, telephone internet signal, route and access to tourist sites, guide and tourist services, map and direction, tourism information service need to be developed. 3) The aggregation of various occupational populations to created the participation tourism activities such as worshipping Buddhist image in Wat Thung Pradu, the way of life of coastal fishing and rope cord making, learning organic farm methods, sand spa and various coconut shell products. 4) Conservation and preservation of environmental and cultural values that visitors can learn from participating in activities 5) Community participation from the tourism management group, the direction of the group from agreed meetings and distribution of tourism income 6) Tourism management by defining rule, the product development, tourism personnel and public relation and marketing from public and private organization assistance.

3. From the assessment Ban Thung Pradu health tourism resources are different potentials as follows 1) Community participation has highest potential for the tourism group to determine the direction and decision making in tourism management, creating jobs generating income and determining the criteria of income distribution to the people in the community to participate. 2) Tourism activities have high potential for tourists to participate based on local identity, appropriateness and safety, diversity and interest. 3) Conservation
and preservation of environmental values, culture and traditions have a high potential from the community rules and practices to participate in tourism activities. 4) Area with tourism attractions has high potential, especially the unique way of life place, the experience and creative health promotion behavior, the conveniently and safety routes 5) Management has a high potential in cooperating with public and private sector for development of tourism in community.

The study of problem and obstacles in Ban Thung Pradu health tourism, based on survey data from interviews with government officials entrepreneur and people in the area, found that 1) The community lacks knowledge and funds to support creating product and the stories of Ban Thung Pradu 2) The problem is that low ability to accommodate tourists is due to facilities not enough, the number of bath rooms, restaurants, souvenir shop, accommodations and public relations signs in the area. The lack of cooperation with local government organizations entrepreneurs and people in the area to continuously drive tourism development, support and manage to solve the problems caused by natural disasters, improve the skill of personnel services and the promotion of tourism in the various channels continuously.

**Suggestions**

1. The government sector in the area should create cooperation between tourism group, entrepreneurs and people in the area to plan the development of various aspects of Ban Thung Pradu including 1) to develop, improve and maintain tourism resources especially the beach area, 2) to support tourism group and people in the area to develop standard of local product and food and 3) to support the development of personnel in the tourism management and tourism services such as accommodations, shops, restaurants and resting places.

2. Ban Thung Pradu tourism group should improve the operations as follows: 1) the local identity product development based on local wisdom, 2) the public relation of community-based health tourism in national and international level channels, tourism guides and private tourism programs, 3) the English language skills training and expertise in being guide, 4) Creating a group of young people who can develop their own technology and communication technology, 5) Collaborating with government agencies in the area and people to develop tourism meanings and 6) Creating a network of tourism alliances in form of health nature and creative tourism route of Royal Coast provinces

3. Ban Thung Pradu tourism group should be developed as a sustainable community-based creative for health tourism, according to the result of study found that Ban Thung Pradu has a high potential level of community-based creative for health tourism and based on sustainable management.

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