

**A Sustainable Development of Agro Tourism Human Resource in Nakhon Ratchasima under Sufficiency Economy Philosophy**

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### ABSTRACT

This study aimed to 1) set up the agro tourism database in order to develop the areas in Nakhon Ratchasima Province by integrating instructional mechanism from Nakhon Ratchasima Rajabhat University, and 2) develop agro tourism staff in district level based on Sufficiency Economy Philosophy in five areas: Pakchong, Muang Nakhon Ratchasima, Wangnamkeow, Chokchai and Khamsakaesaeng. Field survey, in-depth interview and meeting were the research instruments, and participatory procedures were employed in this study with the stakeholders from five target areas. The results were as follows. 1) There was a database of the agro tourism to develop attractions in Nakhon Ratchasima in eight aspects: location, entrepreneur, tourism activity, appropriate visiting time, souvenirs, nearby attractions, travelling plan and strength, weakness, opportunity and threat (SWOT). 2) A development of agro tourism staff based on Sufficiency Economy Philosophy consisted of sufficiency, reasonableness, scenario planning, and knowledge and morality in all five districts.

**Keywords:** Personnel Development, Agro Tourism, Sufficiency Economy Philosophy

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Economic development is the process that increases personal income in a long term by using human resources to the utmost benefit. For this reason, the center of the development in all aspects is the human resource as the performers. Human resource and its quality is the starting point in driving the economic to be sustainable. The high quality human resource and the use of sufficiency economy philosophy in all levels of society will be beneficial in the national economic development.

Thai economy progressively increases, particularly in tourism. Tourism industry creates a large amount of income to Thailand. In the year 2012, Thai Tourism Association summarized the Thai national income from this industry at 965,000 million baht, with 24 per cent increase from the previous year (Thai Tourism Association, 2012). Factors affecting the increase of tourism are from the variety of resources in Thailand, the identity and hostile culture which attract a large number of tourists. Agro tourism is a type of tourism that integrates way of living, culture, agriculture and natural resources. These resources are managed by the community and this action can expand knowledge, network, and technology in agriculture to tourists. In this way, tourists are provided with the opportunity to live and experience natural and fertile tourism resources. Thai agriculture is also known as kitchen of the world because of a variety of agricultural products from all regions.

### 2. METHODOLOGY

This study aimed to 1) set up the agro tourism database in order to develop the areas in Nakhon Ratchasima Province by integrating instructional mechanism from Nakhon Ratchasima Rajabhat University, and 2) develop agro tourism staff in district level based on Sufficiency Economy Philosophy in five areas: Pakchong, Muang Nakhon Ratchasima, Wangnamkeow, Chokchai and Khamsakaesaeng. Field survey, in-depth interview and meeting were the research instruments. The first stage was a data collection process to set up the agro tourism attractions database in five districts. Then this information was utilized to set up the agro tourism human resource sustainable development plan under the sufficiency economy philosophy.

### **3. RESULTS**

#### **3.1 Database system for agro tourism to develop the areas in Nakhon Ratchsima province with the integration of teaching approach at Nakhon Ratchsima Rajabhat University**

Agro tourism database system consisted of five attractions: Sanae Vineyard at Pakchong district, Suan Khao Din Glorify at Muang district, Bu-sai Home Stay at Wangnamkeow district, Melientha suavis Pierre garden at Chockhai district and Integrated Farm at Khamsakaesaeng district. The database system was made up of eight topics: place, entrepreneur, tourism activities, appropriate travelling time, souvenirs, nearby attractions, travel plan and SWOT analysis (strength, weakness, opportunity and threat).

#### **3.2 Agro tourism human resource development in district level based on sufficiency economy philosophy**

Agro tourism human resource development in five places is presented as follows.

##### **3.2.1 Sanae Vineyard at Pakchong district**

Sanae Vineyard is located at Moo7, Klangdong sub-district, Pakchong district, Nakhon Ratchsima province. The owner is Mr. Chan Kitpernpoon, 70 years old and Mrs. Malai Kitpernpoon, 68 years old. This vineyard developed human resource with the concept of moderation by mainly using family members as the workers in the business. For the reasonableness, both the owners and the workers collaboratively learned how to grow grapes, sugar apples and dragon fruit by using organic fertilizer. Consequently, products were well-known with good quality. For self-immunity, the owners and the workers should regularly attend the meetings, trainings and seminars. All members should take care of the surrounding around the vineyard. They should be acknowledged about both theory and practice by the local government organizations. They should uphold morality by creating the awareness in growing only organic products, and selling them with reasonable price. All members must be honest to the customers.

##### **3.2.2 Suan Khao Din Glorify at Muang district**

Suan Khao Din Glorify is situated at Nongrangka village, Moo 12, Kokekruad sub-district, Muang district, Nakhon Ratchsima province. Suan Khao Din Glorify is a public area under Kokekruad Subdistrict Administrative Organization, and responsible by Ms. Rungrueng Kanchanawattana, Chief Executive of the Sub-district Administrative Organization. Suan Khao Din Glorify developed human resource with the concept of moderation by the community leaders and members. They used their wisdom, and mainly relied on community workers instead of outsiders. For the reasonableness, they systematically and collaboratively planned to develop Suan Khao Din Glorify to be home stay in the future. They will invite the public organizations and members to develop facilities for the tourists. They created self-immunity by preparing the leaders and members to all changes that can lead Suan Khao Din Glorify to be

garden and ornament plants farm. They should acknowledge their members and inspect other successful agro tourism attractions. They should uphold morality in human resource development by creating diligent and thoughtful leaders and members. They should be honest to the customers to create life long sustainable development.

### 3.2.3 Busai Home Stay at Wangnamkeow district

Busai Home Stay is run by a group of agriculturalists at Sooksomboon village, Wangnamkeow district, Nakhon Ratchasima province under the name of Moon River Conservation Group Busai village. The agro tourism activity is in the form of home stay. Mr. Inn Moonpimai is the president of Moon River Conservation Group Busai home stay, and there are 20 members. Busai Home Stay developed human resource under the moderation concept by acknowledging leaders and members about the process of arranging home stay activities. For the reasonableness, both leaders and members run the home stay to expose the tourists about local wisdom, culture and traditional way of living. Tourists would stay with local family from Busai village. They created self-immunity by regularly acknowledging the leaders and members to maintain the standard of home stay. They were frequently supported by both the government and private organizations. They should acknowledge human resource individually and as a group in both theory and practice on how to organize home stay. They should uphold morality by collaboratively strengthening family and community and sustainably preserve nature and environment.

### 3.2.4 Melientha suavis Pierre Garden at Chockhai district

Melientha suavis Pierre Garden, commonly known as sweet vegetable garden, is located at Moo 12, Kudsawai village, Pubpla sub-district, Chockhai district, Nakhon Ratchasima province. The owner is Mr. Boonchu Kridkratoke, 43 years old and Mrs. Unchan Kridkratoke, 43 years old. This farm developed human resource under the moderation concept by using family members as workers. For the reasonableness, both the owners and the workers collaboratively learned how to grow sweet vegetable using organic fertilizer to get organic products. For self-immunity, the owners and the workers should take care of the surrounding around the farm, and conserve both nature and environment. Leaders and members should be acknowledged about both theory and practice by the local government organizations. They should uphold morality by creating the awareness in growing only organic products and selling them with reasonable price. All members must mainly consider the community benefit.

### 3.2.5 Integrated Farm at Khamsakaesaeng district

Integrated Farm is located at Moo 4, Khamsakaesaeng sub-district, Khamsakaesaeng district, Nakhon Ratchasima province. This integrated farm is originated from villagers from area 4 (Nook village). They used integrated farm area of Mr. Salid Moongfaengklang, the farm owner and the president of the group. This integrated farm developed human resource under the moderation concept by relying mainly on the villagers from their village to be the workers. The villagers were acknowledged about how to produce agricultural products and sell them with reasonable price for the members. For the reasonableness, all members used local wisdom to produce herbal products, and plan to create new generation to be able to arrange creative agro tourism activities in the integrated farm. For self-immunity, members should be acknowledged about how to organize tourism activities along with raising the environment conservation awareness of the tourists. Leaders and members should be continually acknowledged about both theory and practice by the local government organizations. They should uphold morality by following Buddhist principle and think of community benefit. They should sell the products with the consideration of morality to promote sustainable tourism. Majority of people in the north-eastern region in Thailand is agriculturalists for a long time, specifically in Nakhon

Ratchasima. This province is named as a gateway to the north-eastern region, center of agricultural products and center of tourism. Nakhon Ratchasima has a variety of agro tourism activities, for example plants demonstration, short-course training, home stay, and agricultural product exhibitions and livestock farm. Nakhon Ratchasima has tourism strategic plan with the target of promoting the province to be a sustainable tourism center of north-eastern region. The focus is to support agro tourism activity under sufficiency economy philosophy. This philosophy is not only used as a daily life guideline in family to nation, but it is also used in human resource development under the middle path principle of Buddhism. The knowledge condition of this philosophy includes prudence and appropriateness; and the integrity condition includes honesty, diligence, wisdom, sharing and perseverance. This development guideline focuses on moderation, reasonableness and self-immunity to prepare people to the changes and be capable to response to the globalization era (Jantasorn, 2011).

From this significance, researcher was interested in studying the agro tourism human resource sustainable development under the sufficiency economy philosophy, and setting up the agro tourism database system in five agricultural areas: Pakchong district, Muang district, Wangnamkeow district, Chockhai district and Khamsakaesaeng district. The database system included eight topics: place, entrepreneur, tourism activities, appropriate travelling time, souvenirs, nearby attractions, travel plan and SWOT analysis (strength, weakness, opportunity and threat). This database is useful in supporting the tourism staff to be knowledgeable, skillful, and have positive attitudes. Consequently, this database will ultimately support sustainable agro tourism development under the sufficiency economy philosophy.

#### 4. DISCUSSIONS

4.1 The agro tourism database system to develop five agricultural areas in Nakhon Ratchasima province in eight topics is significant in setting the agro tourism attractions. The eight topics are place, entrepreneur, tourism activities, appropriate travelling time, souvenirs, nearby attractions, travel plan and SWOT analysis (strength, weakness, opportunity and threat). This finding corresponds with a summary of National Science and Technology Development Agency in Thailand (1999:3-13). This agency states that there are three success factors in agro tourism. 1) Agro tourism resources are the agricultural products in both natural and man-made products that create agricultural commodity. 2) Tourism market, a niche market, requires special management for a particular group that is interested in agricultural activities, local culture and traditions. 3) Tourism service includes accommodation (local home and farm hut), restaurants and farm tour. The database is thus significant in decision making and planning of these five areas that utilizes the information in managing and arranging the activities in meaningful and reasonable way. These areas also adopted the sufficiency economy philosophy as a core principle to develop agro tourism attractions in a sustainable way.

4.2 Agro tourism human resource development in district level based on sufficiency economy philosophy was collaboratively operated by leaders and members. The staff were promoted and trained to be skillful, experience and have positive attitudes to effectively contribute to the organization. The example was from the case of Sanae Vineyard at Pakchong district, Nakhon Ratchasima province that mainly relied on family members as the workers. For the reasonableness, both the owners and the workers collaboratively learned how to grow grapes, sugar apples and dragon fruit using organic fertilizer. Consequently, products were well-known with good quality. For self-immunity, the owners and the workers should directly sell the products to the tourists.

This finding corresponds with the study of Petchprasert (2007). The author stated that “community businesses in the saving groups and other production groups effectively supported

community economy and society". In the vineyard, all members should take care of the surrounding. They should be acknowledged about both theory and practice by the local government organizations. They should uphold morality by creating the awareness in growing only organic products, and selling them with reasonable price.

Additionally, members must be honest to the customers. Human resource development strategic plan focuses on moderation as in the example of Suan Khao Din Glorify at Muang district, Nakhon Ratchasima. Both the leaders and members at Nonrangka village used their wisdom and mainly relied on community workers instead of outsiders. This finding is pertinent to sufficiency economy philosophy on appropriate satisfaction with self-capacity (Sufficiency Economy Movement Sub-committee, 2006:12-14).

For reasonableness in systematic future planning to develop Suan Khao Din Glorify as home stay, members planned to invite the public organizations to develop facilities for the tourists. They created self-immunity by preparing the leaders and members to all changes. This finding relates to sufficiency economy philosophy that the development should follow the middle path with the consideration of moderation, reasonableness and self-immunity integrated with prudent and appropriate knowledge (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, 2006:11). The aim is to develop Suan Khao Din Glorify to be garden and ornament plants farm. Members should be acknowledged, and they should also inspect successful agro tourism attractions which relates to the development concept of "life quality" to "self-reliance" by His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej. His Majesty proposed 7 effective development guiding approaches.

These approaches were summarized by Dr. Sumet Tantivejkul that the implication of theory to actual practice should integrate theory with the consideration of relationship between problems and other factors (Wiriyapan, 2002: 67-68). People should uphold moral integrity in continual development of human resource by creating diligent and thoughtful leaders and members. They should be honest to the customers to create life long sustainable development. This finding corresponds with a statement on sufficiency economy philosophy from Tantivejkul (2007:34) that parts of the philosophy is the ability to conserve natural resources and environment, and the development of learning processes through local wisdom along with preservation of Thai tradition and culture.

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