

## Abstract

### Community-based tourism management: A case study of Tambon Paklok Community

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This study on community-based tourism management of Tambon Paklok Community aims to study the context of nine villages in the sub-district and determine their capacity for community-based tourism. It deploys surveys, inquiries and interviews in gathering data from persons involved in managing community-based tourism in nine villages of Paklok sub-district. Interviews with tourists, which include Thais and Chinese, are also conducted for opinions on the villages' tourism capacity. The opinions can also be used for the development of the sub-district's tour routes in the future. The nine villages covered by the study are Moo 1 Ban Pak Cheed; Moo 2 Ban Paklok; Moo 3 Ban Bang Rong; Moo 4 Ban Para; Moo 5 Ban Ko Naga; Moo 6 Ban Ao Por; Moo 7 Ban Yamu; Moo 8 Ban Bang La, and Moo 9 Ban Ao Koong. The capacity of each village is determined in political, economic, environmental, social and cultural aspects based on the following factors: 1) Potential of local people; 2) Potential of local area; 3) Management; 4) Participation; and Positive and negative impacts. Tourists' opinions on the villages' community-based tourism are analyzed based on 5As namely: 1) Attractions; 2) Activities; 3) Access; 4) Amenities; and 5) Accommodation. Findings show all nine villages have similar context and the same level of capacity. Locals generally rely on one another. Islamic teachings influence local ways of life at all villages, except Moo 2 whereby most residents are Buddhists. On economy and environment, villagers make a living out of natural resources and local culture. For example, they engage in artisanal fisheries and farming. Local culture also affects house styles. All nine villages covered by the study have capacity for community-based tourism in regards to environmental, cultural and social aspects.

**Keywords** Tourism, Community-Based Tourism Management, Community, Tourists

Ban Paklok, where most residents are Buddhists, is the first settlement in Paklok Bay area. Locals in the area, now known as Tambon Paklok or Paklok sub-district, have now recognized the impacts of shrinking mangrove forestland on their ways of life. They are also aware of impacts from the use of natural resources for community-based tourism. Villages in the sub-district have used their farming, sea, beach and culture in attracting tourists. The management of community-based tourism therefore is important, because proper direction promises to deliver biggest benefits to the community in economic, social and cultural aspects and also to expand tourism in the ASEAN region.

The objectives of this research project are to study the history and background of Tambon Paklok Community, and the social, cultural and environment context of its nine villages, as well as their capacity for community-based tourism under the Case Study of Tambon Paklok Community.

The research deploys surveys and interviews of people involved in the community-based tourism at all nine villages of Tambon Paklok. Tourists of various nationalities including Thai and Chinese are covered in the research. To determine Tambon Paklok's capacity in arranging community-based tourism and also to prepare tour routes for Tambon Paklok in the future, this research studies the context of the all nine villages in the sub-district as follows: Moo 1 Ban Pak Cheed; Moo 2 Ban Paklok; Moo 3 Ban Bang Rong; Moo 4 Ban Para; Moo 5 Ban Ko Naga; Moo 6 Ban Ao Por; Moo 7 Ban Yamu; Moo 8 Ban Bang La, and Moo 9 Ban Ao Koong. The five aspects of management for community-based development concept applies to this research (Potjana Suansri, 2003: 178-179). These five aspects are politics (Kowitz Phuangngam, 2007), economy (King Rama IX's Sufficiency Economy Philosophy), environment (Thailand Science and Environment Research Institute, 2007), society and culture (Greg Richards & Crispin Raymond, 2007). This research also interviews persons responsible for community-based tourism (Weerapon Thongma, 2004) to assess the potential of each village based on 1) Potential of local people; 2) Potential of local area; 3) Management; 4) Participation; and 5) Positive and negative impacts. Tourists' opinions on the villages' community-based tourism are then analyzed based on 5As namely: 1) Attractions; 2) Activities; 3) Access; 4) Amenities; and 5) Accommodation. Findings are analyzed and the tour routes for nine villages are prepared (Figure 1).

According to findings, each village has the potential to arrange community-based tourism. However, it needs co-operation from all sides and particularly support from government agencies. In addition to the construction of necessary facilities to service tourists, villages in Tambon Paklok Community also need various other forms of support such as the regulation of communities for their better standards, the promotion of income-generating activities, environmental and cultural conservation, waste management, and preparation of transportation routes. The context of each village can be summarized as follows:

Table: Context of Villages by Factors

## Tourism-Related Conditions of 9 Villages

Village	Economic Aspect	Social & Environmental Aspect	Cultural Aspect
Moo 1 Ban Pak Cheed	Farming	Sufficiency Economy Philosophy	85% of locals are Muslims.
Moo 2 Ban Paklok	Farming & Fishing	Natural Resource Conservation Group, Sufficiency Economy Center, and Women's Group for Handmade Chili Paste	95% of locals are Buddhists.
Moo 3 Ban Bang Rong	Fishing	Women's Group for Handmade Chili Paste	All locals are Muslims.
Moo 4 Ban Para	Fishing, trading, and goat farming	Herbal drinks	95% of locals are Muslims.
Moo 5 Ban Ko Naga	Fishing, farming, and homestay services	Self-reliant society	All locals are Muslims.
Moo 6 Ban Ao Por	Fishing and tourism	Sitting by the sea but having environmental problems.	All locals are Muslims.
Moo 7 Ban Yamu	Workers, pier services	Majority of locals are well-off.	All locals are Muslims.
Moo 8 Ban Bang La	Workers, homestay services, and fishing	Development of housing estates that welcome people from other areas to move in.	70% of locals are Buddhists.
Moo 9 Ban Ao Koong	Fishing	Close to the nature	All locals are Muslims.

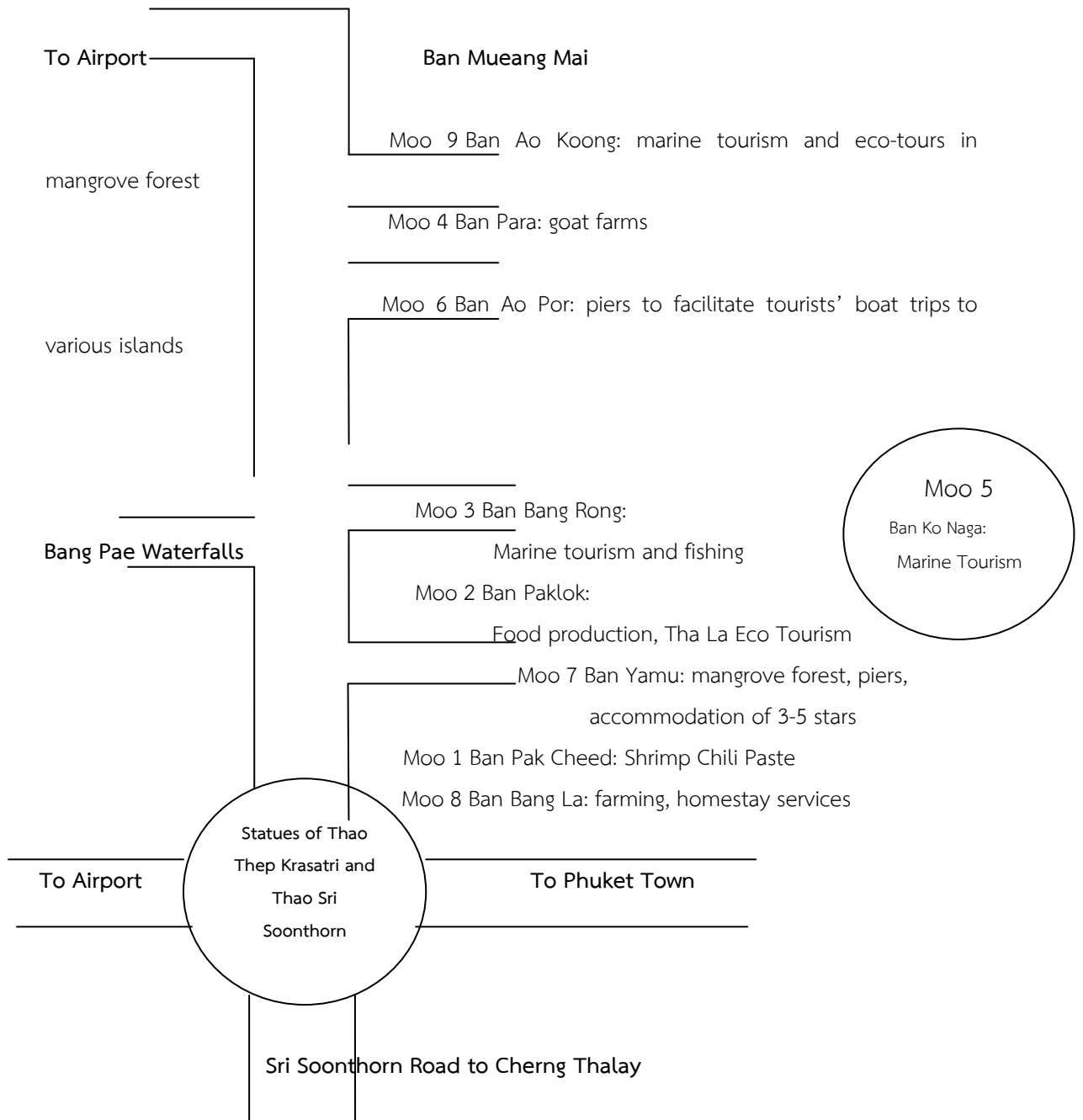


Figure 1: Tour Route for Community-Based Tourism in Tambon Paklok Sub-district

## Obstacles for Community-Based Tourism

1. Obstacles to the development of attractions for community-based tourism: For example, There are obstacles related to area management for trips to visit staghorn coral reefs in Ban Ao Koong, limitations regarding the number of tourists per boat, and time constraints. Staghorn coral reefs in the area are visible only on the first, second and third nights of a month in low-tide period. With inadequate staff, it is also difficult to control tourists resulting in damages to marine ecological system. Coral-reef degradation will happen fast, if such problems are not properly addressed. Aside, locals are worried that if Ao Koong ro Koong Bay is open to tourism, investors and even government agencies may step in to manage local tourism for profits and exclude locals in management of their own area despite the fact that locals have conserved their local ecological system for more than 30 years.

2. Obstacles related to pier management: Serious obstacles are detected at piers in Ban Ao Por, Ban Yamu, and Ban Bang Rong. Most of them are related to the fact that investors are in charge of management while locals end up as daily-paid workers. This means most benefits go into the hands of outsiders, not local people. Many locals hope that government agencies will help solve this problem and ensure benefits are fairly shared with local people.

3. Obstacles related to access to attractions, public relations (PR) for attractions, and area management: PR, route signboards, and transportation facilities are not adequate, causing confusion among people exploring new attractions. People living outside villages, who are as a result not familiar with local routes, in particular are not able to access attractions such as the Learning Center of the Women's Group for Handmade Chili Paste in Ban Paklok, the Goat Farm Group in Ban Para, and staghorn coral reefs in Ban Ao Koong. Hence, local attractions should be better promoted among outsiders.

## Solutions

1. Regarding area management for attractions, relevant authorities should provide constant support to projects implemented by villages, acknowledge their development plans, and understand their context. According to Weerapon Thongma's concept (2004), the potential of each area in regards to natural landscape, culture, local traditions and local wisdom must be cherished and conserved by locals, and also used efficiently with sustainability in mind. All sides involved must be ready to learn, understand and have foundation from right support for proper area management.

2. Regarding pier management for marine tourism, all sides involved must respect opinions of others, have vision, and demonstrate understanding in the need to promote tourism-related facilities. Moreover, relevant authorities must provide cooperation. The management of piers in Ban Ao Por, Ban Yamu, and Ban Bang Rong requires discussions among tour operators, government agencies and local people so as to formulate guidelines and make preparations for tourism with all sides expected to take part in activities that benefit the society as a whole.

3. Regarding access to attractions and PR, many forms of communications should be conducted directly and indirectly in an easy-to-understand manner. Today, the use of social media in particular is important because social-media communications can be made fast, anytime, anywhere. PR activities also should take place through collaboration of all parties involved. For example, direction signboards should be erected with the help of the Highways Department. Moreover, local PR divisions should set up their websites for PR purposes. The PR divisions of the Tambon Paklok Municipality and Public Relation Department of the provincial authority, for example, should promote attractions in each village on their websites.

### **Tambon Paklok Community's Capacity for Community-Based Tourism**

Findings from field surveys, interviews, and questionnaires involving target groups cover political, economic, environmental, social and cultural aspects as the research determines the capacity of each village for community-based tourism via 1) Potential of local people; 2) Potential of local areas; 3) Management; 4) Participation; and 5) Positive and negative impacts. The research, moreover, analyzes tourists' opinions on the 5As factors for tourism management namely: 1) Attractions; 2) Activities; 3) Access; 4) Amenities; and 5) Accommodation. Discussions of findings are then done based on four topics namely: 1) Village Management; 2) Positive and Negative Impacts; 3) Capacity for Community-Based Tourism Management and 4) Preparations based on 5As concept. Summary of the findings are based on findings analysis. However, as this research covers as many as nine villages, presentations of findings can be complicated. Some villages have also shared many similarities to a point that they have hardly any difference. As a result, the summary findings thus are presented as follows:

#### **1. Village Management**

**1.1 Local people:** All villages are ready to use their local wisdom for tourism by exposing visitors or tourists to their local ways of life and social harmony. For example, each village has local scholars who are skilled in many fields of arts and demonstrations of fishermen's ways of life. Ban Ko Naga, for example, has even organized tours that engage tourists in local accommodation, local food, local products, and interactions with local people. On average, the level of locals' knowledge and readiness to learn for community-based tourism ranges between 3.00 and 3.70 in scores. The level of their readiness to propagate their knowledge and engage others scores between 2.76 and 3.52. In all, each village has sufficient knowledge and understanding of its potential for livelihood and use of local resources. Ban Ao Koong, for example, has made efforts in utilizing staghorn coral reefs that otherwise would have been left useless. Local villagers know about high- and low-tide periods, thus knowing exactly when reefs are visible. They therefore have organized tours to let between six and 10 tourists from other areas to make a boat trip and admire staghorn coral reefs in their village.

**1.2 Areas:** On average, the level of villages' potential in conserving community resources and using them reasonably based on the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy scores between 3.16 and 4.16. The conservation of local culture that are worthy of sharing scores between 2.56 and 4.00. All villages want the government support in regards to area development. The need for government support, based on locals' opinions, ranges between 2.80 and 3.50 in scores. All villages covered by the research boast outstanding natural, social and cultural characteristics. However, all of them share several similarities except Ban Paklok, Ban Bang La, and Ban Pak Cheed where residents include newcomers. As outsiders have moved into housing estates in these three villages, their way of using local resources are different from other nearby villages. Most residents of Ban Paklok, Ban Bang La and Ban Pak Cheed are now farmers. They earn a living via rubber plantations, fruit orchards, and vegetable farms. Tourism activities in their villages therefore are mainly agritourism. Some residents have earned a living by delivering services such flower-arrangement services beyond their villages.

**1.3 Management:** Every village accords importance to management, access to information, participation in village activities, and respect for religious leaders/community leaders. On the overall, locals gave their village's management scores of between 2.60 and 3.60. The scores are especially high in Ban Yamu, where locals are very supportive of one another.

**1.4 Participation:** The majority of locals in every village attend meetings and public forums on their village plans and networking with other nearby villages for the purposes of developing integrated tour routes. Participation scores, based on the opinions of locals, range between 2.48 and 3.35. However, some villages, such as Moo 8 Ban Bang La, still has not connected to other villages as it is adjacent to Sri Soonthorn district and the number of migrants in the village is higher than old residents.

## 2. Positive and Negative Impacts

**Positive impacts:** All villages, except Ban Paklok whereby most villagers are Buddhists, have applied Islamic principles to their lives. The application not only makes these villages strong but it also enables them to use local resources well.

All villages enjoy abundance of resources, both in land and in the sea. For example, aquatic animals can be caught from the sea for household consumption and sale for extra cash.

Their land is also abundant and good for farming. These villages therefore have farmland, fruit orchards and livestock farms for both household consumption and commercial distribution. Such ways of life can be presented to outsiders as parts of ecotourism and agritourism.

The research finds that locals' opinion scores for community-based tourism development range between 3.00 and 4.28 on average. At Moo 4 Ban Para and Moo 5 Ban Ko Naga, locals have even opened their home to tourists so that they can learn from one another.

**Negative impacts:** The arrivals of outsiders sometime cause business, environmental and social conflicts. For example, there are disputes over benefit sharing, waste, pollution, and religious, cultural, and social differences. Coordination between government agencies and locals is still not

comprehensive. Locals find it difficult to contact government agencies over some issues they want to discuss, because of coordination delays.

Regarding transportation and access to attractions, PR materials for directions are not clear. As some tourist sites are difficult to reach, government agencies have been asked to help more.

On villages' capacity for community-based tourism, locals feel they need external support to fully develop attractions in their areas. On negative impacts from such tourism, locals' opinion scores range between 2.64 and 4.28. By topics, scores are particularly high when it comes to access to attractions and PR demand.

### 3. Capacity for Community-Based Tourism

**3.1 Political Aspect:** This aspect addresses local leaders' management power in villages, support for locals, decentralization, justice, problem solving, responsibility for people, and their success in implementing work plans. Local people's opinion scores on the potential in political aspect ranges between 2.8 and 3.55. The scores are highest in Moo 7 Ban Yamu, with locals giving the scores of just between 3.4 and 3.73. The scores are lowest in Moo 8 Ban Bang La, with locals giving the score of just 2.30. Politically speaking, locals have applied Islamic teachings to administration except in Ban Paklok whereby 90 per cent of residents are Buddhists.

**3.2 Economic aspect:** All villages apply Sufficiency Economy Philosophy to their livelihoods and generation of supplementary income. Satisfied with their economic conditions, these villages only hope that they can serve tourists with existing resources, for example, by recommending natural attractions and processing local crops such as plants, vegetables, fruits, livestock and aquatic animals into products. These villages are interested in promoting their sea, waterfalls, aquatic-animal sanctuaries, handicrafts and local products to tourists for tourism and income generation. Locals' opinion scores on their village's economic potential for community-based tourism range between 2.76 and 3.64. Every village covered by the research can sustain itself through the use of local resources. Local people, for example, work as fishermen, farmers, and tour-boat entrepreneurs.

**3.3 Cultural aspect:** On the propagation and conservation of local culture/ traditions, scores for the nine villages range between 2.76 and 3.72. Ban Ko Naga is the village with strongest conservation of Muslim culture and arts. This village communicates its culture with tourists, with locals welcoming visitors to their home for the exchange of experiences. Some local houses serve as learning centers while some others offer homestay services. Local youth are also inculcated with the love for local culture and the intention to conserve it. Opinion scores on villages' potential in cultural aspect range between 3.30 and 3.76. Ban Bang Rong and Ban Ao Por also sell their culture to visitors by integrating their cultural identity to activities tourists can take part in. For example, tourists are welcome to join Muslim praying rites or fasting. Tourists can also learn to cook local dishes at Ban Paklok. In Ban Bang La and Ban Pakcheed, tourists can enjoy local handicrafts.



**3.4 Environmental aspect:** Every village covered by the research conserves its natural resources and use them with maximum efficiency. It, therefore, can develop natural attractions. Ban Yamu, Ban Ao Por and Ban Ko Naga have piers to serve tourists. Ban Bang Rong features Bang Pae Waterfalls, a wildlife sanctuary whereby the project to return gibbons to wilderness is implemented and Bang Sai Beach. Ban Ao Koong, meanwhile, boasts staghorn coral reefs.

#### 4. Tourism Capacity based on 5A

This research asks tourists, including Thai and Chinese, for opinions on villages' tourism to determine their satisfaction. Discussions on the findings for the future development of villages covered are as follows:

**4.1 Attractions:** Natural attractions and cultural activities available at the villages are the first factor that tourists consider when planning their trips. Tourists' opinion scores on villages' attractions range between 3.30 and 4.27. Therefore, it can be concluded that all villages should conserve local attractions on a sustainable basis.

**4.2 Access:** It refers to roads connecting villages and attractions, as well as related facilities. Tourists hope there is good management of access. Their opinion scores on the villages' access range between 3.33 and 4.20. In response to their hope for integrated and more convenient tour route for the whole sub-district, the researcher has drawn up the map as shown in Figure 1: Tour Route for Community-Based Tourism in Tambon Paklok Sub-district.

**4.3 Amenities:** Tourists want convenience from restaurants, car parks, and souvenir shops. They expect such facilities to have adequate capacity to accommodate their needs, referring to facilities such as piers at Ban Bang Rong, Ban Ao Por, and Ban Yamu. Tourists' opinion scores on the villages' amenities range between 3.03 and 4.47. At present, three piers at the aforementioned three villages have been improving their facilities with aim to deliver greater convenience to tourists. Being improved are roads, shops and traffic-flow management in regards to both road and boat users.

**4.4 Activities:** This factor addresses interactions between homeowners and tourists in regards to interaction time, provision of convenience, introduction, communications and information given. For example, tourists expect to be informed of activities in boat tours and safety precautions, and also provided with safety equipment. Tourists' opinion scores on activities range between 3.31 and 4.27. Regarding activities, homeowners in all villages covered by the research are worried that cultural and language differences may cause misunderstanding or hinder communications/learning. So far, all families participating in community-based tourism are keen to promote their local culture and arts. For example, they have produced rubber dolls, cooked local dishes, organized events based on local traditions and religious beliefs in their villages.

**4.5 Accommodation:** It is necessary that accommodation is adequate, convenient, clean and well-equipped to accommodate tourists. Tourists are most satisfied with homestay services at Ban Naga. On the overall, their opinion scores on accommodation range between 3.42 and 4.08. Ban Naga and Ban

Bang La are most successful as accommodation providers, because locals open their own home to provide accommodation and encourage cultural exchanges. Ban Yamu, meanwhile, is unique in that it prepares accommodation of high-end tourists or foreigners who prefer peaceful places of stay with convenient access to island hopping.

From research findings, the researcher has drawn up three recommended tour routes for nine villages in Tambon Paklok or Paklok sub-district based on their potential as follows.

## Recommendations

**1<sup>st</sup> Route:** Featuring natural attractions, it is perfect for a one-day trip of island hopping covering Ban Yamu, Ban Ao Por, Ban Bang Rong, and Ban Ko Naga, and of eco-tourism activities such as those available in Ban Paklok and Ban Ao Koong.

### Route for Nature Lovers



**2<sup>nd</sup> Route:** This is an agritourist route via which tourists can participate in many activities and learn knowledge that can be applied to their daily life. Attractions in the route include the Ban Paklok Sufficiency Economy Philosophy Learning Center, Ban Para's Goat Farm, and Ban Bangla farms.

### Agritourist Route





**3<sup>rd</sup> Route:** This cultural route creates interactions between locals and tourists, enabling them to exchange their experiences and exposing visitors to local ways of life, culture and traditions. Homestay services are provided, with local dishes made of local ingredients served. Ban Bang La, Ban Pak Cheed, Ban Ko Naga and Ban Yamu are covered by this recommended route.

### Cultural Route



### Conclusion

This research presents the capacity of each of the nine villages covered in all aspects namely local people, local area, management, participation, political, economic, social, environmental and cultural context and tourism factors with aim to help villages in Tambon Paklok Community develop sustainable community-based tourism in the future. This research goes in line with the research conducted by Suthee Sertsri, which focuses on the identity of Klongklone Community in Samut Songkhram province in respects of history, riverside ways of life, and mangrove forest. Saowapa Phaitayawat too discussed the existence of community culture in urban society, citing Soi Soda and WatPrachaRabuthum communities as a case study of community-based tourism that relies on social support and local participation. Her research is in accordance with the research on crop management for tourism by Thongchai Sribenjachot, who points out that tourists are interested in fruits grown in Chanthaburi province and this fact increase tourism opportunities. In conclusion, this research has

drawn up three tour routes for Tambon Paklok or Paklok sub-district, just like how Narong Pleerux has mentioned four historical and cultural routes for the country's eastern coast area. This research, in all, provides complete findings for the development of sustainable community-based tourism.

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