



Potential for Developing Tourism in Banteay Chhmar, Cambodia

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Received 28 December 2010

Accepted 31 January 2011

Abstract Tourism in Banteay Chhmar have been growing gradually since early 2002 with the assistance of the Banteay Chhmar Community-Based Tourism (CBT), a service provider to the tourists who visit and stay in the ancient historical resort. In 2008, there were 924 tourists visited the Banteay Chhmar tourist site. Due to the slow increase tourists visiting Banteay Chhmar, a field study was done in 2009 to investigate the current management of tourism in Banteay Chhmar. The objectives of the field study are to determine the impact of tourism on the local livelihood and environment, to evaluate the potential of tourist attraction sites and to analyze the constraints and opportunities for increasing tourism in Banteay Chhmar. In order to achieve the objectives, 14 semi-structure interviews, 17 questionnaires, 60 evaluation data sheets, mapping, some participatory rural appraisal (PRA) tools, direct observation and a strength weakness opportunity threat (SWOT) analysis were conducted. The results showed that the Banteay Chhmar CBT plays important roles in tourism management. Since the tourism began, the share of tourism in employment contributes 12 % of the total income and improved people's living standard. Moreover, awareness of cultural and environmental value had also increased. However, the overuse of water from the moat, vegetable gardening and waste disposal inside the temple affects negative impacts in the tourist site. Cultural and historical sites and local traditional ways of life are the main tourist attractions. Aside from the main attraction which is the Banteay Chhmar temple, other CBT services were also enjoyed by many tourists such as exploring the satellite temples, cycling, ox-cart riding and visiting the villages. Opportunities for tourist development were identified, such as increasing tourism through widespread tourism information, new income from visiting the temple and the temple's registration as a World Heritage Site. In contrast, mass tourism versus of CBT be concerned about sexual trafficking issues, and drug smuggling could be constraints for future tourism development. In conclusion, the research suggested that any future tourism development must be balanced in all economic, social and environmental aspects.

Keywords Banteay Chhmar, community-based tourism, tourism development, SWOT, PRA

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is considered as the major sector that contributes to the development of national economy in Cambodia. It provides additional income and employment opportunities that improve the living standard of local people and contribute on poverty alleviation (Tek, 2006).

Cambodia is among the countries in Southeast Asia and around the world that have plenty of natural and historical resorts with ancient culture across the country that plays an important role in tourism. The Banteay Chhmar temple which is located in Banteay Chhmar Commune, Thmor Pouk District, Banteay Meanchey Province depicting the Khmer Kingdom during the Angkorian Period is one of the greatest architectural masterpieces in Southeast Asia. Moreover, it is one of the

Cambodia’s top-listed historical sites being nominated for UNESCO’s World Heritage (GHF, 2009).

However, the lack of conservation and management results Banteay Chhmar’s temples and towers gradually collapse, disintegrated and overgrown with trees. In addition, looting is also occurring in Banteay Chhmar (GHF, 2009) which therefore conservation and proper management are necessarily needed.

The objectives of this study are to investigate the current management of tourism in Banteay Chhmar, to determine the impact of tourism on the livelihood and environment, to evaluate the potential of tourist attractions and to analyze the constraints and opportunities for increasing the tourism in Banteay Chhmar.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, several methods were carried out to achieve the above objectives that include; interviews, questionnaire surveys, participatory rural appraisal, mapping, direct observation and strength weakness opportunity threat analysis. The interviews were conducted with 10 households in which 5 households from CBT members while the other 5 households were non CBT members. Moreover, 4 key elderly people interviews and 21 informal interviews were also done to get better understanding on the tourism in Banteay Chhmar. To evaluate on the tourist attraction sites, 17 tourists were interviewed using the questionnaires and 60 samples of tourist evaluation datasheets from the CBT were used. In addition, Venn diagram was utilized to indicate regarding with the current management of tourism, Pie diagram was utilized to distinguish the impact of tourism on livelihood and environment, Seasonal Calendar, Dream map, and Snake and Ladder of the PRA were to evaluate the constraints and opportunities develop tourism in Banteay Chhmar. Furthermore, GPS mapping were also done to point out the tourist attraction sites during the observation in the studied area, as for SWOT analysis was done after collecting the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Roles of stakeholders on tourism management

There are some stakeholders that are strongly involving in tourism development, tourism management and improving the tourism services in Banteay Chhmar such as CCBEN, GHF, CBT.

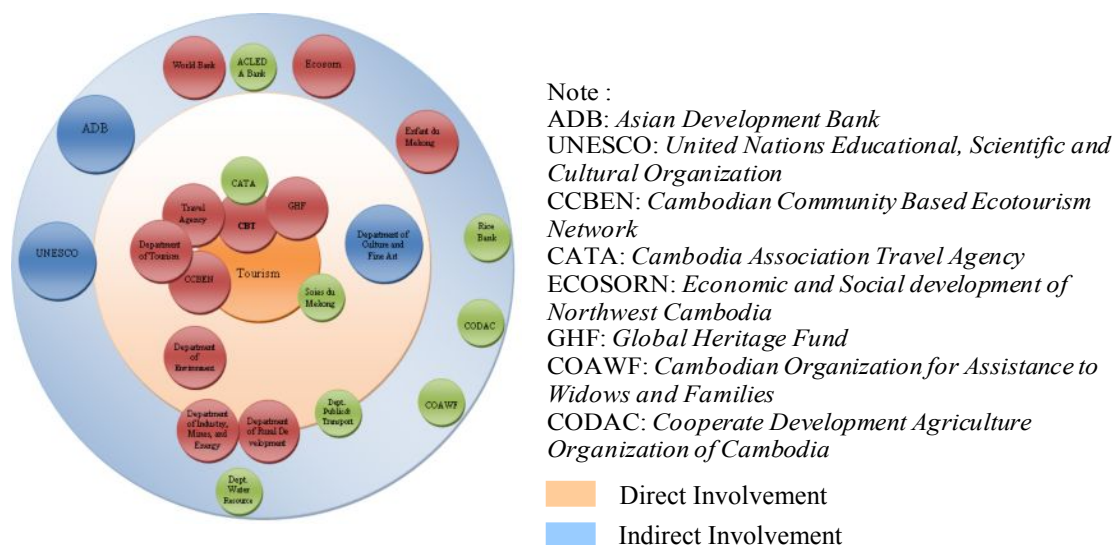


Fig. 1 Diagram of stakeholders’ relationship in tourism development in Banteay Chhmar

Impact of tourism on livelihood and environment

The impact of tourism on livelihood is the change of income sources of CBT members indicating a share of 12% in the total income after involving in tourism (Fig. 2). The income from tourism has played important role of CBT member’s expenses not only reinvestment in tourism but also investment in the existing activities (Fig.3). Moreover, CBT income from tourism also contributes 13 percent in Local Development Fund (Fig.4). Tourism in Banteay Chhmar is increasing the people’s awareness on the environment. Now the environment is not yet polluted because it’s under control of CBT, however, the main problem is the overuse of water from the moat, vegetable gardening and waste managing around the main temple. To prevent any problems, the zoning system has been proposed to manage future development effectively and efficiently.



Fig. 2 Changes on daily activities of CBT members a) before and b) after involving in tourism industry

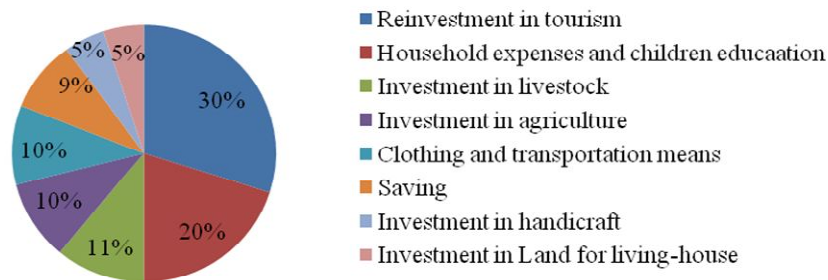


Fig. 3 The diversified expenditure on the income from tourism

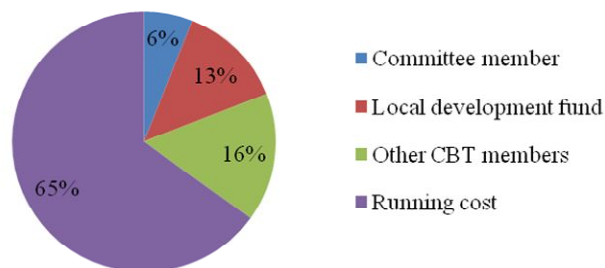


Fig. 4 The benefit sharing from tourism income in Banteay Chhmar CBT

Tourist attraction scheme

Tourist attraction scheme was analyzed through the data sheet from CBT. General tourist attractions were ranked from 1 (lowest satisfy) to 5 (highest satisfy). Among those attractions as shown in Fig. 5, cycling, visiting the temples and ox-card riding are the most attractive activities for tourists.