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KEY WORD: COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION, COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM,
SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

NATTAMON RATCHARAK: NAKHON SRI THAMMARAT PROVINCE:
PROBLEMS IN HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT. THESIS
ADVISOR: PROF. WILLIAM W. CHAPMAN, Ph.D., 425 pp.

Promotion of conservation of historic sites, traditional culture, and natural environment are the significant trends to develop tourism in an area. Ecotourism and cultural based tourism are developing with more rationale and accomplishing the conservation goals, as these are vital in order to realize the success of conservation programs.

However, the National Economic and Social Committee commented in the final report that Nakhon Sri Thammarat province is one of poor areas in southern Thailand. Its economic system presented a lower growth rate respectfully and also produced the lowest average income per person in the south. On the positive side, the area represents the most variety and richness of tourism resouces in the region. In addition, it is named “the city of Buddhism” of the region.

Therefore, it has been suggested that these outstanding characteristics can attract more tourists visiting for this area and help develop the potential of the tourist attractions. By this reason, tourism developer and planner must pay attention on major international and domestic tourism trends in order to manage for tourism development that “*meets present and future expectations of tourists and accomplishes sustainability of the tourism sector*”.

The promotion and conservation of natural environments, historic places and cultural traditions are significant trends for tourism development. As this is fundamental in the approach for implementing conservation programs, especially so for any tourism areas that offer limited resources. This is in accordance with effective tourism planning and management is needed in order to optimize the benefits of tourism and to mitigate any problems

Inspections of the site and studying the outcomes and suggestions of open-ended questions of local residents, local authorities and tourists have confirmed that there have existed many problems and deficiencies. Because of that, implementation programs of cultural heritage management, sustainable tourism development, as well as monitoring and evaluation programs have been proposed in order to standardize and regulate the satisfaction level of both local residents and tourists.

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