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SUSTAINABLE USE OF THE LOWER SEGMENT OF THE MAE KLONG RIVER,
SAMUT SONGKHRAM PROVINCE. THESIS ADVISOR : CORAZON CATIBOG-
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Due to natural heritage degradation and unsustainable use of natural resources in Mae Klong within the province of Samut Songkhram are at present getting very serious. To solve and prevent such problem it is vitally essential for a “bottom-up” approach to the management and use of the Mae Klong River to have more participation in solving them. Therefore the four objectives of this dissertation were: (1) to determine the natural and cultural heritage values of the downstream section of the Mae Klong River, (2) to determine if the natural and cultural resources of the Mae Klong River are being used by the local communities sustainably, (3) to assess the environmental issues (natural, cultural, social, and political) of the Mae Klong River in the context of sustainable tourism, and (4) to provide recommendations for the successful management of the Mae Klong River for sustainable tourism.

The secondary data were collected from published reports and articles from books and academic journals including oral history, traditional songs, and local stories about Mae Klong River, and government annual reports and technical publications. The primary data were gathered from all information collection from field observations and interviews. Each interview consists of four parts: 1) general information of local communities; 2) the local communities and their uses of the natural resources of the River; 3) an awareness of the local communities who value the River toward the natural and cultural attributes proper management of the River; and 4) the management and environmental issues of Mae Klong.

The local residents residing along or close to the River were found to be more knowledgeable and more aware of the natural resources of the River. The majority of the respondents has recognized the cultural value and associated symbolism of the Mae Klong River. Most of them are familiar with traditional Thai song that is linked to the River. However, only few of them appreciate the aesthetic value of the Mae Klong River due to the polluted state of the River. Most local residents are unaware and have little information about the history of the Mae Klong River but they have interest in seeing tourism development in the study area similar to Amphawa. More importantly, most of them have an interest in the sustainable use of natural resources in the Mae Klong River as well as the natural resource conservation and cooperation.

The study explored that the management should provide more environmental training and seminars on river conservation to every community household because this will ensure the sustainability of natural resources in the Mae Klong River for the benefits of the present and future generations.

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