Abstract

This dissertation draws attention to the ecotourism activities lead by indigenous people, as well as its involvement in Mu Ko Surin National Park, Thailand since the ecotourism ventures proposed by the Andaman Pilot Project (APP) has recognised the potential of the Moken as ecotourism attractions. The study aims to investigate the indigenous ecotourism venture development lead by the Moken people in Mu Ko Surin National Park (SNP), Thailand as a case study.

The study is a combination of secondary and primary researches in order to accomplish the proposed aim. The empirical data collection includes questionnaire for tourists, targeting 200 respondents, semi-structured interviews with the person in charge of the APP and observation of the current ecotourism tour lead by the Moken.

The outcome of the observation illustrated that, although the ecotourism project has been running for nearly 5 years, only a small number of tourists have participated in the project. On the other hand, there is positive outlook that the Moken people have their own potential to develop and perform ecotourism projects. In addition, SNP and the indigenous people (mainly those who participated in the APP) have demonstrated that their relationship with each other is not going well. This could be attribute to the following: (1) SNP has not yet seen the possibility of ecotourism activities lead by the Moken people, for example, the trails are not fully developed to cater to tourists; and (2) SNP intentionally does not pay any attention to the Moken community as this issue was not put in the Master Plan.

Moreover, results identified that most common tourists are of Thai decent. The main purpose of visiting SNP is for recreation activities. In addition, the national park system in Thailand represents the ecosystems and its environment with diversity of fauna and flora. Some respondents claimed that SNP does not sufficiently provide any support to the Moken community. However, the respondents also believed that in the future, SNP will pay more attention to the Moken.