

# GUIDELINES FOR SOCIAL NETWORK DEVELOPMENT TOWARDS ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION AND WAYS OF PEOPLE' LIVES AT FLOATING MARKET FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN TALING-CHAN DISTRICT, BANGKOK

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**Abstract** - This research aims to find the level of people's participation towards environmental conservation and ways of live along the canal for people. 400 people as samplings and other 30 driven leaderships were interviewed. The result showed that people dwelling in the 5 floating market areas were members of the social groups, especially Saving (AomSab) Group. Traditionally, each member is accustomed to one another and joins Buddhist activities regularly e.g. Makhabucha Day, Buddhist Lent Day, and Traditional Customs: New Year Day, Songkarn Day, Father Day, and Mother Day. Besides everyone is satisfied with facilities and accommodations in each community including water supply, electricity, and telephone. Importantly friendship among them provoked to live peacefully and happily. On weekends or holidays, people come to the floating market as a recreational tourist attraction, and some bring agricultural products to sell. About environmental conservation, people have conserved traditional activities and rituals such as Loy Kra Tong Festival (Floating floral decorated banana cut stem), Chak Pra Festival (Pulling Image of Buddha on the barge), Paying respect to Mother Goddess of the River, and so on. The findings showed that people participated in each activity in the medium level but were aware of environment and ways of lives in the high level.

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**Keywords** - Participation, Environmental Conservation and Way of Life, Sustainable Tourism, Urban Floating Market

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Since "human capital" is the key player in terms of a country's development, human capital development is required for Thailand's sustainable prosperity. According to the Eleventh National Economic and Social Development Plan II, it is necessary to develop morality, lifelong learning, and appropriate skills within Thai citizens at different ages. It is also important to strengthen social institutions and local communities to recognize and adapt to the social changes (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, 2011: 8). This means, in the past decade, the main goal of such plan still emphasizes on strong and sustainable "people" and "locality". Raising awareness among the citizens is significant for the local development because it requires a number of decades to foster a social value, for example, the sense of local community, traditions, environmental conservation, and virtue. Therefore, the roles of schools and families are highly crucial. A community should have participation in every sector. "Community-based tourism" is one of the instruments which not only contributes to the revenues and living space of the local people, but also gathers the groups of people who work together; this is the reason why the government implemented the National Tourism Development Plan 2012-2016 as the awareness and recognition make generate income and strengthen the local community (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2011: 6). Moreover, it can positively and concretely promote the national development, for example, rapid

job creation and income distribution in the local areas all over the country. It also contributes to the transportation system development and infrastructure development such as roads, electricity, and water supplies in the local tourist attractions. Community-based tourism can build the common understanding among the local people and prevent the emigration problem in the country. Social capital derives from assembling, mutual thinking, and mutual working, based on the trust, relationships, and valuable culture in Thai society which accumulate through the relationship network consisting of citizens, institutions, culture, and knowledge; these are the sources of power in the community and society (Khamman and colleagues, 2008: 5). When tourism development becomes a trend in a community or a local area, the community would positively gain the revenues from their local products, but their existing natural resources and environment would decrease or vanish. The environmental issues in tourist attractions are hard to solve because it takes time and needs the awareness of the tourists as well as local people who live near the tourist attractions. The government may not be able to take care of this by themselves alone; the participation and support from every sector is recommended, especially in the urban tourist attractions where a great deal of water resources is consumed. Raising awareness among the people is the investment in social and cultural capital development. Fostering the citizens, who are kindhearted to others without expecting anything in return and believe in common interest, can be an approach to sustainably

conserve the environment and natural resources in the tourist attractions.

The setting of this research is the floating market in Taling-Chan District, Bangkok, which is an important tourist attraction of urban people to spend time during weekends for relaxing, cruising, and buying local goods. There are five connected tourist attractions in Taling-Chan District which are Taling Chan Floating Market or Khlong Chak Phra located in the heart of the city and maintaining the nature and way of riverside life, Klong Lat Mayom Floating Market, Wat Saphan Floating Market, Wat Champa Floating Market or King Rama III Memorial Park, and Wat Taling Chan Floating market. These five floating markets open on Saturdays, Sundays, and public holidays from 9 am to 5 pm. When a local community has a floating market as a tourist attraction, there is likely to be an effective economic growth. However, the local people should be careful about the negative effects of tourism such as garbages, wastewater, canal intrusion for residential construction, customer or tourist stealing, cleanliness, conflict of interest, parking space, restroom, and business expansion which destroy community green areas. Therefore, to establish a sustainable and rich floating market is to preserve the existing environment as much as possible. This conforms to the guideline on tourism development strategies of the fiscal year 2014 that is to creatively and sustainably preserve and to develop tourism resources by developing infrastructure, tourist landscape, and tourist facilities, standardize the security of tourist attractions, and promote tourist attractions as well as their activities, identities, and folk wisdom in a creative way (Action Plan 2014, Taling Chan District Office, 2014: 19). Nowadays, Taling-Chan District and nearby environment have been destroyed by the local people and tourists who were not aware of environmental conservation, but considered only trading, investment, and temporary interest. Hence, in order to restore, conserve, and promote traditional activities which are bound with Taling-Chan people's way of life, raising mutual consciousness among local people is truly important as a main instrument for building and strengthening the harmony in the community.

## II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

First, to explore the level of participation in social networks as well as the level of public consciousness to preserve the riverside way of life in the floating market according to sustainable tourism in Taling-Chan District, Bangkok.

## III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is a qualitative and quantitative research. The population and samples as well as the research settings are listed as follows:

1. The geographical waterway data from five floating markets consisting of 1) Taling Chan Floating Market

or Khlong Chak Phra, 2) Klong Lat Mayom Floating Market, 3) Wat Saphan Floating Market, 4) Wat Champa Floating Market or King Rama III Memorial Park, and 5) Wat Taling Chan Floating market opened on January 12, 2013.

2. Group 1: 400 local people (Yamane, 1973: 125)

3. Group 2: 30 community leaders who were community chairman or official community committee, and/or community mobilizers of five floating markets, interviewed by a structured interview.

The researcher collected data by using questionnaires and interviews, then analyzed the data by estimating the frequency, percentage, arithmetic mean, and standard deviation to describe the general information of the samples. In addition, the researcher used descriptive analysis to analyze the interview data based on the specific data structure. The four-scale evaluation of the daily participation in riverside activities consisted of 'always', 'usually', 'sometimes' or 'occasionally', and 'never'; the scores and their percentage are shown at each level. Moreover, there are evaluations of the participation in environmental conservation and riverside way of life, value of environmental conservation and riverside way of life, and the practice of environmental conservation and riverside way of life; the scores are divided into five levels as follows: 4.21- 5.00 (Highest), 3.41- 4.20 (High), 2.61- 3.40 (Medium), 1.81- 2.60 (Low), and 1.00- 1.80 (Lowest) (Silpcharu, 2006: 77).

## IV. RESEARCH RESULTS

There are five "urban floating markets" in Taling-cha District, Bangkok consisting of Taling Chan Floating Market or Khlong Chak Phra, Klong Lat Mayom Floating Market, Wat Saphan Floating Market, Wat Champa Floating Market or King Rama III Memorial Park, and Wat Taling Chan Floating market. The floating market where most foreign and Thai tourists visited is "Klong Lat Mayom Floating Market". This floating market is a land-based market combined with floating market. Goods, including agricultural products were both sold from boats and on land. Most floating vendors were the local people, while a number of vendors who were the outsiders tended to sell their products on the mainland. So, there were a variety of products that made this become a community market with food diversity. Most of the food were instant food which could be bought from all three big zones.



Figure 1-2: Trading on Land and from Boats (Taken on 24 January 2016)

It found out that people still used boats as a means of transportation and normally lived along the water routes which connected the floating markets altogether since water was clean and could be used on the daily basis, for example, bathing, earning a living, and watering their gardens. However, these areas were invaded by urbanization and the increase of populations, especially non-registered populations.



Figure 3-4: Children Playing in the Water Like in the Past.



Figure 5: Riverside Way of Life (People Catching Fish) (Taken on 10 June 2016)

Moreover, community activities that local people mostly participated included Makabucha Day, Songkran Festival, New Year's Day, National Children's Day, Buddhist Lent Day, Mother's Day, and Father's Day. The local people also participated in the attractive riverside or other water-related activities that traditionally and culturally used canals as the locations (for instance, Loy Kratong Festival, Chak Phra Festival, and Songkran Festival; 46.3 percent), religious ceremonies (for example, water apology or boat nymph worship; 44.0 percent), canal conservation campaigns (35.0 percent), gardening using canal water (28.5 percent), and fish feeding along nearby canals (23.8 percent). The activities that people always participated and never impacted the environment consisted of garbage disposal (76.5 percent), building materials sewage (71.5 percent), and wastewater disposal (67 percent). The overall image of the public participation in environmental conservation and riverside way of life in Taling-Chan District, Bangkok, was rated at the medium level as shown in the table below.

This shows that people were aware of the participation in environmental conservation and riverside way of life. However, the overall image shows that the local people did not actively pay attention to conservation but often participated in environmental conservation. Therefore, we should raise an awareness among the

children to increasingly volunteer, learn, and play a role in listening to the voice of the community.

| participation level in environmental conservation and way of life | Mean        | S.D.        | Level         |
|---|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| mutual responsibility   | 3.47        | 0.67        | high          |
| mutual benefits   | 3.39        | 0.73        | medium        |
| mutual recognition and understanding                              | 3.31        | 0.64        | medium        |
| mutual operation  | 3.12        | 0.88        | medium        |
| mutual follow-up, investigation, and assessment                   | 3.11        | 0.80        | medium        |
| mutual consideration and decision                                 | 2.99        | 0.81        | medium        |
| mutual thinking and expressions                                   | 2.98        | 0.76        | medium        |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>3.19</b> | <b>0.61</b> | <b>medium</b> |

Table 1: shows the arithmetic mean and participation level in environmental conservation and way of life. The overall image is described in order from the highest to the lowest as follows:

In terms of the practice level in environmental conservation and riverside way of life under the consciousness of the local people, it found out that the overall image of local people practicing in environmental conservation and riverside way of life was rated at high level (3.62). The details are described as follows:

| No.          | The Practice in Environmental Conservation and Riverside way of Life   | Mean        | S.D.        | Level       |
|--------------|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1            | The cooperation on canal cleaning to preserve clean water.   | 4.16        | 0.72        | High        |
| 2            | Instantly warning the people who dump garbage into the canals.   | 3.93        | 0.80        | High        |
| 3            | Instantly supporting the community or institution that mobilizes the canal conservation.                                     | 4.00        | 0.70        | High        |
| 4            | Always warning one's self that "Do not dump things into the canals".   | 4.33        | 0.65        | Highest     |
| 5            | Caring the Riverside trees by using organic fertilizers instead of chemical fertilizers.                                     | 4.16        | 0.90        | High        |
| 6            | Using eco-friendly materials in the activities that are related to the canals such as materials for making floating baskets. | 4.17        | 0.77        | High        |
| 7            | Traveling by row boats   | 3.51        | 0.86        | High        |
| 8            | Water usage for amusement or relaxation (water play)   | 3.53        | 0.93        | High        |
| 9            | Promoting environmental conservation and riverside way of life to the tourists.  | 3.99        | 0.76        | High        |
| 10           | Suggestion or Consciousness Raising among the family members about environment conservation and riverside way of life.       | 4.34        | 0.75        | Highest     |
| <b>Total</b> |  | <b>3.62</b> | <b>0.47</b> | <b>High</b> |

Table 2: shows the practice level in environmental conservation and riverside way of life under the public consciousness.

This shows that most people had always told others and warned themselves "Do not dump things into canals"; in addition, they should be aware of environmental conservation and riverside way of life and preserve it as long as possible.

Moreover, the guidelines for social network development towards environmental conservation and ways of people's lives at floating market for sustainable tourism in Taling-Chan District, Bangkok consist of the following protocols: Guideline 1) the local people should begin with their family members by always warning themselves to "not dump things into the canals". Parents should also teach their children to take responsibilities in environment and social conservation, love things that support their daily lives, sufficiently live with those facilities, and treat the public places like their residences; in addition, parents need to be a good role model for their children and raise consciousness that "water is essential for living". Guideline 2) the local people should establish a community network where they meet one another to promote their familiarity once a week. They should appoint community leaders and youth leaders to arrange the canal rehabilitation and conservation activities near the floating markets. Moreover, they should mobilize community leaders to establish the cooperation of "U. HTS" network which consists of university, home, temple, and school with the administrative institution in Taling-Chan District. This system can create the activities empowering a sustainable social network development for environmental conservation and riverside way of life. Guideline 3) local people should participate in the social campaign whereas every merchant can use technology to communicate with the people from other floating markets all over the country. The local people should use this platform to exchange their opinions, present their products and atmosphere, and continuously conserve the environment and riverside way of life.

## V. RESEARCH CONCLUSION

According to the guideline for social network development towards environmental conservation and way of people's lives at floating market for sustainable tourism in Taling-Chan District, Bangkok, nowadays, Taling-Chan District was ranked one of top 50 Districts in Bangkok for its green areas. Furthermore, this area had a lot of canals which were connected together, so there were more boats cruising around than other Districts. When there were a lot of water areas, the waterway trade like in the past still remained even though it had been decreasing. Nonetheless, tourism had become more and more important, so urban cities should organize some areas to specifically support tourists. Therefore, floating markets were established. Taling-Chan District had five floating markets, but the most important floating markets were Klong Lat Mayom Floating Market and Taling Chan Floating Market. During the grandfathers' generations, local people tended to live along the canals. In contrast, the latter generations preferred to travel on land because it had been more comfortable. Nevertheless, for urban markets, it is highly important

to preserve the green areas and water as much as possible. The approach to environmental conservation and riverside way of life with the participation from every sector, especially from the landowners who were local people, is the key to start the consciousness raising for water and environmental conservation among the youth and children. This should begin with families to warn one another "do not dump things into canals". Additionally, parents should foster their children to take responsibilities in environmental and social conservation, to love things that support their daily lives. We should be aware of the fact that 'water is essential for living' and 'dumping garbage or sewage into canals can create wastewater'. Parents should also raise consciousness on regular water saving among their children. Moreover, there should be a good social network supported by the public participation that includes mutual thinking, planning, practicing, follow-up, and taking responsibilities for creating the sustainable unity.

## VI. DISCUSSION

Presently, the most remarkable floating markets in Taling-Chan District, Bangkok are Klong Lat Mayom Floating Market and Taling Chan Floating Market. These two floating markets still conserve the traditional features of floating markets. In other words, there were both waterway and mainland trading. Both markets were opened on Saturdays, Sundays, and public holidays. People still used canals for travelling. Sometimes, families living on riverside still used water in the canals to wash and clean their agricultural equipment or their own houses and courtyards. They also caught fish in the canals. In addition, people had mostly participated in the community activities, especially Buddhist festivals such as Makabucha Day, Songkran Festival, New Year's Day, National Children's Day, Buddhist Lent Day, Mother's Day, and Father's Day. They usually participated in merit making activities to promote their state of mind. People felt that "this community is like another home that they are bound with". (Phusit Phukamchanoad, 2011) It shows that the way of people's lives is linked with the community; their community was not only a temporary residence for working. For the way of life, people still used water in the canals to arrange the traditional and cultural activities, for example, Loy Krathong Day, Chak Phra Festival, and Songkran Festival. They also used canals to conduct their religious ceremonies, for example, water apology or boat nymph worship. There was little participation in environmental conservation and riverside way of life in the community; it was rated at medium-low level same as other areas. The researcher found that most of volunteer community leaders and local people participated in environmental resources or community forest conservation at medium level (Somboonchai, 2000; Komstra, 2015). On the other hand, the results showed that community leaders or committee of urban

area in Dusit District had participated in the community or area development at high level (3.25). When the researcher considered in each part specifically, the part that was rated as the highest in terms of participation is problem and cause seeking in community development (3.56), community development practice and investment (3.50), and assessment follow-up in community development (3.47), respectively (Phukamchanoad, 2009: 129). However, the researcher found that in Taling-Chan District, people were aware of the participation in mutual responsibility which was rated at highest level. This is because people not only had participated in environmental conservation, but they also had to encourage children who were interested to establish volunteer groups to organize environmental and canal conservation activities as well as the riverside way of life. Moreover, parents had to teach their children who had opportunities to learn environmental and canal conservation and riverside way of life. They had to raise an awareness about the fact that “water is essential for living” and “dumping garbage or sewage into the canals can cause wastewater”. They also had to teach children to save water on a regular basis. They also needed to promote self-awareness by suggesting or fostering family members to be aware of environmental conservation and riverside way of life, and always warn themselves to “not dump things into the water.” Furthermore, they had to cherish the things they needed at the moment. This conforms to the research written by Nikitch Plaichum (1997) that studied the ethical concept and consciousness of people living along the Nakhon Chai Si River towards the environmental conservation and water pollution reduction. He found that the highest rated indicator regarding the ethical concept and consciousness of people living along the Nakhon Chai Si River is “The environment, especially the resources along the Nakhon Chai Si River, belongs to every people living in this area, so they have to cherish it”.

## VII. SUGGESTIONS

Family leaders and community leaders should raise an awareness among their family members and the local people to learn and understand the process of participation in area development that it is truly useful to promote the operation quality among the public sector. Therefore, they should build the unity, harmony, and generosity in the community.

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