

THE STUDY ON THE ROLES OF TOURISM IN CONSERVATION LOCAL RESOURCES – THE CASE OF A RURAL AREA, CENTRAL VIETNAM –

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1. OBJECTIVES AND BACKGROUND

Our concerns have recently focused worldwide on solutions of global environmental issues and regional developments so that local resources have been revaluated and tourism utilizing them has been activated. In Vietnam, through Doi moi policy enacted in 1986, the government has driven the economic growth. The government has also made strong efforts to conservation of tourism resources including rich natural resources, ecosystem, and living areas of ethnic minority people in mountain areas. Due to urbanization and other several policies, the living conditions in ethnic minority people in rural or mountain areas and the natural environment surrounding them have been affected and changed gradually or damaged in some cases. We have to evaluate tourism's environmental and social impacts, and these evaluation should be conducted more to find out the generality or commonality of these topics. In this study, one hamlet in which ethnic minority people live is chosen as a study area and the objectives are as follows: (1) to clarify the structure and changes of tourism compared with the past, (2) to detect the roles of tourism for managing and keeping local resources, and (3) to reveal problems villagers are facing to utilize local resources sustainably.

2. STUDY AREA AND METHODS

The study site is *Doi* hamlet, Thuong Lo commune, Nam Dong district, Thua Thien-Hue province, which is located in Central mountain areas, and *Cotu* ethnic minority people are living there. The villagers have done farming (wet-rice cultivation, cassava cultivation and etc.) and forestry (acacia plantation, rubber tree plantation). And at the beginning of 2000, external organizations supported people in *Doi* hamlet and they started tourism in which traditional culture of *Cotu* ethnic minority people was introduced, visitors visited Kazan waterfall and several activities were conducted. In this study, I conducted participant observations and semi-structural interviews to all households (157 households) there from September to October, 2014. The collected datasets were mainly the basic information of households and tourism.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From these results, it was found that around 70% of the households joined the tourism as workers or audiences, and it contributed to preserve "traditional skill", which was one of the local resources there. On the other hand, compared to the early phase of the tourism in *Doi* Hamlet, some problems were detected such as decreasing help by outside supporters, pollution of Kazan Waterfall, and suspension of produce/sell of traditional clothes. Residents greatly depended on exterior supports so that once assistance had been finished they easily lose their regional resources. Therefore, it would be important to establish the sustainable system to manage their regional resources by themselves.