

# Poverty Alleviation Inspiration in Tourism Development Strategy of Asean

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**Abstract:** Most of ASEAN countries are facing poverty due to lack of economic opportunity for poor people and medium people. Tourism is good growth and support GDP of ASEAN countries since 1990s to now. Thus, this research will support poor community participation and more opportunity in tourism sector of ASEAN. It will find applicable strategies to overcome difficulties and gain opportunities of tourism development that will make more benefit to community. This research is applied literature review, field data collection to hotel owners, restaurant owners, shop owners, staff of tourism business, transportation services and tour agency/ tour guides in Bagan ancient city of Myanmar and field observation to Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia and Cambodia tourism sites.

**Index Terms:** ASEAN, poverty, economic opportunity, tourism, community participation, strategy.

## I. INTRODUCTION

ASEAN countries are Lao PDR, Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, Myanmar, Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Philippines and Singapore which support intergovernmental cooperation and economic, political, security, education and sociocultural sharing among countries [1]. There have 10 countries and 2 observer countries on total area of 4,522,518 km square with 651 million populations in 2018.

According to OECD (2018) [2], Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in emerging ASEAN is estimated to grow by 6.4% in 2017 that is higher than Latin America and the Caribbean, 1.1% and Africa, 3.4% respectively. Moreover, among the ASEAN 10 countries, Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar will grow GDP faster than other ASEAN countries during 2018-2022. ASEAN GDP is 2,499 (US\$ billion) in 2013, 2,568 (US\$ billion) in 2016 and 2,765 (US\$ billion) in 2017 via 3.3% and 3.5% of World GDP in 2013 and 2017 respectively [3]. ASEAN tourism supports towards the ASEAN countries moving to the economic growth with 'Inclusive' 'Green' and 'Knowledge-based' goals [4].

Thus, it will make ASEAN by 2025 as a quality tourism destination delivering a unique, diverse ASEAN experience through responsible, sustainable, inclusive and balanced tourism development as poverty alleviation to poor people and wellbeing of ASEAN people.

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## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Poverty alleviation in ASEAN countries

Regarding to Association of Southeast Asian Nations, (2017) [5], there has ASEAN framework action plan for poverty eradication during 2016-2020 in order to enhance participation and social responsibility of ASEAN peoples to promote capacity building and human rights benefits to eradicate poverty.

Table (1): ASEAN GDP by Economic Sector's Percentage in 2017 [3]

ASEAN countries	Agriculture (%)	Industry (%)	Services (%)
Brunei Darussalam	1.1	58.7	40.2
Cambodia	20.6	33.1	39.3
Indonesia	12.7	40.1	47.2
Lao PDR	15.3	35.1	39.4
Malaysia	8.2	38.4	52
Myanmar	23.3	36.3	40.4
Philippines	8.5	34	57.5
Singapore	-	24.4	67.1
Thailand	6.3	36	58.1
Viet Nam	14.8	35	38.8

Human migration is old phenomenon since the ancient history in the world. In 1970, there were 84,460,125 migrants as 2.3% of the world's populations for their livelihood [6]. That still increase in 2015 with 243,700,236 migrants (3.3% of world's population). That does the consequence to human trafficking victim or women migrant violence in high income countries. Asia has increased migrants to other countries reaching 40 million in 2015. Moreover, migration from ASEAN to the oil-rich Gulf countries has significantly increased since 1970s [6].

ASEAN countries are working together poverty alleviation and other forms of Millennium Development Goals through creating together in peace, freedom and dignity of ASEAN people in social, cultural, political and economic benefits [5]. Thus, it has road map agreed by ASEAN countries since 2009 for comprehensive action and set up a monitoring mechanism.

It was found that two countries have not a national poverty line in contrary of other eight countries do reduce country poverty rate's population to become less



than half of current poverty rate. Therefore, educational situation of ASEAN has been improved in enrollment, literacy and gender equality in education through increasing girls studying at tertiary level [2]. Beyond that, numbers of parliamentary women have doubled than 1990 with 18% of respective countries' parliamentary members.

ASEAN community has still challenging to reduce infant and child mortality and malaria disease. Moreover, the achievement of tuberculosis and access to drinking water are less improvement over 25 years [7].

**B. ASEAN tourism development**

ASEAN is rich of natural forest, mountain land scape, beaches and diverse culture to attract tourists towards 11 natural and 17 cultural heritage sites by UNESCO [4]. Thus, tourism is important of the ASEAN economy growth with US\$ 112.6 billion in tourism exports / foreign exchange earnings and US\$ 294.4 billion of travel/tour operations, shopping, entertainment and services by 2013.

ASEAN has excellent arrivals growth in its share of Global arrivals during 2010-2014 through 56% of leisure travel, visiting friends/relatives at 26% and business purpose at 16% by UNWTO' 2015 report. Thus, UNWTO hopes to increase arrivals number to ASEAN with 123 million by 2020, 152 million by 2025 and 187 million by 2030 that will benefit direct or indirect income and employment to poor people of ASEAN.

Table (2): ASEAN Tourist Arrivals ('000 visitors) [3]

ASEAN countries	2013	2016	2017
Brunei Darussalam	3,279 (3.21%)	219 (0.19%)	259 (2%)
Cambodia	4,210 (4.12%)	5,012 (4.34%)	5,602 (4.46%)
Indonesia	8,802 (8.61%)	11,519 (9.97%)	14,040 (11.19%)
Lao PDR	3,779 (3.7%)	4,239 (3.67%)	3,870 (3.08%)
Malaysia	25,716 (25.16%)	26,757 (23.15%)	25,948 (20.67%)
Myanmar	2,044 (2%)	2,907 (2.52%)	3,443 (2.74%)
Philippines	4,681 (4.58%)	5,967 (5.16%)	6,621 (5.28%)
Singapore	15,568 (15.23%)	16,404 (14.19%)	17,425 (13.88%)
Thailand	26,547 (25.98%)	32,530 (28.15%)	35,381 (28.19%)
Viet Nam	7,572 (7.41%)	10,013 (8.66)	12,922 (10.3%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>102,198 (100%)</b>	<b>115,56 (100%)</b>	<b>125,51 (100%)</b>

It was observed that women are half of tourism jobs in Thailand, Philippines and Viet Nam but they received lower wages in low skilled jobs. Regarding to ASEAN Tourism Ministers in Nay Pyi Taw for 2016-2025, there are 10 tourism development areas like 1) marketing and promotion,

2) product development/standards, 3) human resource development, 4) tourism investment, 5) quality tourism, 6) sustainable growth and development, 7) travel facilitation, 8)safety and security, 9) connectivity and infrastructure, and 10) responsiveness to climate change.

**C. Community benefits in tourism sector of ASEAN**

As Association of Southeast Asia Nations (2016) [8], ASEAN tourism standards are 1) green hotels, 2) food and beverage services, 3) public restrooms, 4) home stays, 5) ecotourism, 6) ecotourism, 7) tourism heritage and 8) community based tourism (CBT). Therefore, CBT must a form of tourism through empowering communities in tourism management and community participation in economic, social and environmental sustainable development.

Therefore, CBT must have following principles as;

- Participate and empower community to obtain ownership and management
- Maintain partnerships among relevant tourism stakeholders
- Working together with respective authorities
- Develop social welfare and improve human dignity
- Ensure a fair benefit sharing mechanism to local community
- Support local and regional economies
- Conserve local culture and tradition
- Preserve natural resources of tourist destinations
- Support visitor experiences

**III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This research is applied the secondary data upon literature review to find poverty alleviation of ASEAN people using community benefit tourism development strategy. Moreover, author did field visit during 2017-2018 to tourism sites of in Yangon, Mandalay, Inlay lake, Ngapali beach, Ngwe Saung beach in Myanmar, Bangkok and Chiang Mai in Thailand, Borobudur biggest Buddha temple, Bali and Lombok Island in Indonesia, Cambodia and Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia to observe ASEAN tourism situation in culture, attraction places and its quality of services to tourists.

Moreover, questionnaires are prepared and asked to 55 persons of tourism business sector in Bagan tourist sites in February, 2019 to observe current situation and challenges of tourism. SPSS is applied to analyses these socio-economic and their needs and perceptions to develop tourism sector.

**IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

**A. ASEAN tourism Analysis**

Pearson's As tourism is one of the world trade and prosperity actors, it does not change to be poverty alleviation in the World [9]. Tourism in many developing countries became the main source income. Thus, it can direct benefit to poor people through employment in



tourism enterprises, goods and services or by operating community based enterprises that reduce poverty status.

Chances towards poverty alleviation by tourism are;

- Response to assets; Rural areas have fair climate, forest, biodiversity to attract urban tourists that make advantages for tourism than other economic business in developing countries.

- Doable work by the poor; Due to tourism is labor intensive micro enterprise for women, young and disadvantage group like ethnic people, the poor who have less skill, little investment can work in tourism sector as part time job.

- Widespread sector; All tourism products have many activities with a wider supply chain in agriculture, handicrafts and other transport. Thus, it makes multiplier impact to people.

- Consumers change to producers; Tourism can change consumers to producers. The interaction between tourists and poor communities can increase awareness of cultural, environmental and economic cases of both sides to improve local investment in infrastructure.

However, there have negative impacts for poverty alleviation by tourism as;

- Unpredictable demand; Due to tourism is sensitive of economic, environment and socio-politics affecting to travel interest, the poor can be vulnerable by downswings demand.

- Seasonal demand nature; It is necessary of good integration in tourism and other economic activity for the whole year round work for poor

- Threat to poor community resources; Water, land, food, energy sources and biodiversity in tourism area, can be threatened for poor in competition and overuse by tourism.

- Inclusion of poor; Lack of engagement and investment of the poor, they gain less benefits from the tourism

Although tourism is not the answer of poverty elimination, it can make significant changes of community if tourists spending increase towards the poor. That will need focusing on two assistances as;

- Private sector business must grow large operations and SMEs of tourism sector. But, they must help to provide more benefits and assistance to the poor in capacity building, employment, skill to be professional.

- All destinations must be attractive and sustainable in resource management and connections between tourism and other economic sectors.

There are popular tourist destinations in ASEAN, but it must include the poor benefits more and more. These top tourism attractions in Brunei are [10]:

- Ulu Temburong National Park
- City and water village tour
- Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin Mosque attraction
- Bandar Seri Begawan Waterfront
- Muara beach

Top tourism attractions in Cambodia are [11]:

- Angkor Wat temple attractions
- Kratie town (dolphin see)
- Bayon temple
- Tonle Sap freshwater lake visit

- Sihanoukville port city and beach

Top tourism attractions in Lao PDR are [12];

- Vientiane capital city tour
- Luang Prabang river bank tour (UNESCO World Heritage Site)

- Vang Vieng ecotour
- Si Phan Don Islands

- Bokeo Nature Reserve tour

Top tourist attractions in Indonesia are [13]:

- Bali visit
- Borobudur Temple tour
- Merapi Volcano
- Jakarta sightseeing tour
- Sepa Island visit

Top tourist attractions in Malaysia [14] are;

- Kuala Lumpur visit (The Petronas Twin Towers, Aquaria KLCC, Islamic Arts Museum, Menara KL Tower, etc)

- Sunway Lagoon Theme Park
- Bako National Park
- Melaka Historic City (UNESCO World Heritage Site)
- Batu Caves, Selangor

Top tourist attractions in Myanmar [15] are;

- Yangon (Garden city visit)
- Bagan Ancient City and Pagoda Land
- Mandalay last kingdom city
- Ngapali beach
- Popa Mountain National Park

Top tourist attractions in Philippines [16] are;

- Boracay Island's 12 beaches tour
- Cebu Island
- Banaue ' rice terrace tour
- Historical Vigan city visit
- Manila tour

Top tourist attractions in Singapore [17] are;

- Marina Bay Sands
- Sentosa Island
- Botanical gardens
- Orchard Road
- Merlion Park

Top tourist attractions in Thailand [10] are;

- Inthanon mountain, Chiang Mai
- Bangkok tour
- Phuket beach
- Ayutthaya ancient city (UNESCO listed)
- Mae Hong Son

Top tourist attractions in Vietnam are;

- Hanoi capital
- Hoi An
- Halong Bay
- Nha Trang beaches
- Sapa market town

## B. Bagan tourism business analysis

Bagan is one of tourism destinations, located central Myanmar's dry zone area.



Bagan is the capital of the first Myanmar kingdom and around 13,000 Buddhist temples were seen and tourists and local visitors are interested to visit Bagan [18]. There are field data collections using questionnaires to 55 numbers of tourism business owners and staffs during February, 2019 to observe tourism business situation of Myanmar as case study. There is mostly 51% (28 respondents) is '41 to 60 years old age'.

Gender	Male	Female	TOTAL
Age group	7 (13%)	0	7 (13%)
Education	7 (13%)	5 (9%)	12 (22%)
Occupation	8 (15%)	14 (26%)	22 (40%)
Other	8 (15%)	6 (11%)	14 (26%)

Table (3): Gender and Age group of tourism business' respondents

Gender	18-40 yrs old	41-60 yrs old	Over 60
Male	12 (22%)	16 (29%)	2 (4%)
Female	10 (18%)	12 (22%)	3 (5%)
TOTAL	22 (40%)	28 (51%)	5 (9%)

Only 26% of business' respondents are graduated and most are only 'Matriculation' with 40%, thus it is issues to networking or observing international tourism business sector and communications to tourists, etc.

Table (4): Education level of tourism business respondents

Gen	Prim	Mid	Matriculati	Gradu
Male	4 (7%)	3 (5%)	2 (4%)	6 (11%)
Female	3 (6%)	1 (2%)	11 (20%)	7 (13%)
TOTAL	7 (13%)	4 (7%)	13 (24%)	13 (24%)

Table (5): Occupation of tourism business respondents

Gender	Hotel owner	Restaurant owner	Shop owner	Staff of tourism business	Transportation (bike, pony cart, car) person	Tour agency/guide	Other
Male	4 (7%)	3 (5%)	2 (4%)	6 (11%)	10 (18%)	4 (7%)	1 (2%)
Female	3 (6%)	1 (2%)	11 (20%)	7 (13%)	0	2 (4%)	1 (2%)
TOTAL	7 (13%)	4 (7%)	13 (24%)	13 (24%)	10 (18%)	6 (11%)	2 (4%)

Note: (p= 0.007 significant in Chi square test)

Table (6): Monthly income of tourism business (US\$)

Gender	Less than 131\$	132-327\$	328-654\$	> 654\$
Male	2 (4%)	15 (27%)	5 (9%)	8 (15%)
Female	3 (5%)	5 (9%)	7 (13%)	10 (18%)
TOTAL	5 (9%)	20 (36%)	12 (22%)	18 (33%)

(Note: p= 0.148 is not significant in Chi square test)

58% of respondents increase revenue by tourism, but 5% of respondents disagree that. 56% of visitors are satisfied to visit Bagan and only 4% disagree that. 49% of respondents do not know any Gov; policy and support towards tourism business. There is 56% of respondents strongly agree 'Community benefit by tourism'.

There are 'strongly agree' and 'Agree' on 'More individual investment in tourism' with 38% and 31% of respondents, respectively. But, they need sufficient loans from banks that

There is collected information to 7 hotel owners, 4 restaurant owners, 13 shop owners, 13 staffs of tourism related business, 10 personnel who are providing transportation services (bike, pony cart, car) to visitors, 6 personnel of tour agency/tour guide, and 2 of other job in Bagan ancient city.

There is significantly different in male and female 'job of tourism sector. Women are dominant in shop selling and no women in transportation services. Staff of tourism related business are similar numbers in Bagan 36% of tourism business respondents has monthly income of 'US\$ 132-327' and 33% received 'more than USD 654' as following Table. Male and Female' monthly income is not significantly different in Chi square test.

'Strongly agree' and 'Agree' by 44% and 38% respectively.

34% of respondents strongly agree the 'Better networking of stakeholders' to improve tourism sector as well as 60% of respondents strongly agree 'To improve quality services and products' that is important attraction of tourists visit.

Table (7): Perceptions to tourism business

Perceptions	Strongly agree	Agree	Do not know	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Increased revenue by tourism	32 (58%)	18 (33%)	2 (4%)	3 (5%)	-
Visitors feel satisfied	17 (31%)	31 (56%)	5 (9%)	2 (4%)	-



Received Gov; policy & support	-	10 (18%)	27 (49%)	15 (27%)	3 (6%)	<p><b>C. Capacity building to poor people in ASEAN</b> That will need capacity building to the poor community of ASEAN, particularly financial management, homestay management and ecotourism related services. Part time on job training must be led by INGOs and donor agency focusing the poor community.</p> <p>Govt staff will be needed capacity building on project management, handicraft making , value added of local products skill training. That must be done village based training approach upon available resources in their villages. Therefore, market will be new market or competitive market of tourists, that will need professional work and cheaper prices in each product of respective communities.</p> <p><b>D. Government to Government support and private coordination</b> In tourism sector, Thailand and Malaysia can support other countries in terms of techniques in hospitality, destination management and new attraction tourism products to other ASEAN countries. Private sector is lack of coordination in ASEAN at tourism development and poverty alleviation inspirations. Thus, they must be persuaded in cooperation or advice and networking support to the poor people' SMEs of tourism.</p>
Community benefit by tourism	31 (56%)	19 (34%)	3 (6%)	2 (4%)	-	
Need more individual investment in tourism	21 (38%)	17 (31%)	7 (13%)	10 (18%)	-	
Need access sufficient loan from banks	24 (44%)	21 (38%)	9 (16%)	1 (2%)	-	
Better networking of stakeholders	19 (34%)	14 (26%)	18 (33%)	4 (7%)	-	
To improve quality services and products	33 (60%)	17 (31%)	5 (9%)	-	-	

**V. DISCUSSION**

**A. Government support policy to involve poor people in tourism business**

Although, ASEAN countries have tourism business development policy in each respective country, it will need to involve inclusion of the poor in this sector. Most of Gov; policy are attractive and favor to FDI in tourism sector, it will need to coaching to include the poor people and not to compete the poor current market in tourism.

Therefore, it must have the poor based tourism idea must be performed in each tourism development process. Thus, policy dialogue, forum, workshop must be held in ASEAN and sharing to ASEAN countries, that should be followed by rules and regulations. It will need technical strong policy committee in ASEAN to support each country' policy inclusion of the poor. Private sector must include performing this policy setting up with milestones in target year.

**B. Poverty alleviation strategy in tourism of ASEAN**

Most of ASEAN populations are living with poverty and not inclusive in SMEs or high position jobs. Most of companies and wealth are coming from Chinese families like Thailand, Lao, Cambodia, Malaysia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Philippines and Singapore.

Thus, poverty alleviation strategy must focus to tourism development in these respective countries by creating new destinations and capacity building to ethnic minorities. Therefore it will need new infrastructure development projects in rural and ethnic area as well as advertising to foreign countries and cooperation mechanism within the poor community and among ASEAN countries.

The most target beneficiary must be women and disable people, to include in tourism as well as finding job opportunity in FDI companies like hotels, restaurants and other services of tourism sector.

**VI. IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

This article will encourage to policy makers and tourism stakeholders for sustainable ASEAN tourism in terms of cooperation, FDI increasing in new attraction infrastructure, capacity building to staffs tourism sector to compare other developed countries, sharing culture of tourism.

There will need to discuss ministers of tourism and hotel sector from ASEAN countries following country policy planning discussion and Public Private Partnership of tourism' opportunities. That is limited to cover high level future inspiration and planning stage to be analyzed in this study. Thus, most are assessed from minister level meetings of ASEAN, that cannot cover in each respective country' tourism policy' strength and weakness in a short time. Future cooperation in 'Research & Development' must be set up plan, expertise and budget to find ASEAN sustainable community based tourism and other type of tourism creation in ASEAN.

ASEAN is rich in natural resources, landscape and quality beaches to attract tourism. Therefore, this research will support Government and private sector of ASEAN working together tourism development through poverty alleviation will.

Reducing poverty will make more tourists visiting and more refresh their mindset, relax and happiness along their journey to ASEAN.

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