

Blending handicrafts and tourism development the good way of preservation of tradition and poverty alleviation in rural areas

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This paper (presented at workshop on promotion of craft village-based tourism along West- East corridor, Co-organised by Vietnam National Administration for Tourism; ASIA Seed Institute and JODC (Japan) May, 2005) explained the strength of handicraft and tourism development in the scheme of the socio economic approach, and discusses the overall strategy of implementing the tourism and handicraft development project in Vietnam. Approaching from both the macro perspectives as political level and micro perspective as village activities

What is traditional craft?

1. Taking shape, existing and have a long-standing development in the country
2. Assembly producing, forming craft villages or streets.
3. Having generations of skillful workers and craftsmen
4. Having the stable technique of Vietnamese nation
5. Using the nation 's materials
6. Being the typical and original product of Vietnam with high value and quality, being the artistic and cultural products and even the nation 's cultural heritage with Vietnamese identity

Vietnam handicrafts overview

- *According to survey conducted by JICA and Ministry of Rural and Agriculture Development (MARD)*
- There are 2017 villages where traditional crafts have been practised for more than 100 years. (defined as villages with over 20 percent of the households involved in handicrafts or over 20 percent of their income derived from handicraft production)



Vietnam handicrafts overview

- Villages engaging in bamboo and rattan weaving number 713, and account for 24 percent of the country's traditional craft villages.
- Fabric weaving villages number 432, or 14.5 percent of the total; furniture making, 342 villages or 11.5 percent; and embroidery and lace making, 341 villages, or 11.5 percent.
- Handicrafts have provided employment for around 1.35 million people
- Of whom 342,000 work in rattan and bamboo weaving, 233,000 in sedge weaving,
- 136,000 in fabric weaving, and 129,000 in embroidery.
- More than 60 percent of handicrafts workers are women, and the rate reaches 80 percent in embroidery and fabric weaving.

Vietnam handicrafts overview

- Handicraft workers have an average income of 366,000 VND a month, higher than the country's average of 295,000 VND and the rural average of 225,000 VND.
- Handicraft and fine arts articles are strong export items of Vietnam. According to the Ministry of Trade, the export value of those items in the first nine months of this year increased 7.496.
- They employ 1.5 million workers, contributing significantly to poverty reduction and increasing income for rural areas. Culturally-imbued and traditional handicrafts have proven to give rise to the country's increasing export value.

Kinds of rural tourism

- Natural tourism, which is mainly for recreation with little or no ecological impact.
- Cultural tourism, which is concerned with the culture, history, and archeology of local people;
- Ecotourism, which is a responsible type of tourism which preserves natural resources as well as maintaining the well-being and social values of the local population

Kinds of rural tourism

- Village-based tourism, in which tourists share in village life, and rural villages gain economic and other benefits from tourist activities
- Agrotourism, in which tourists watch or take part in traditional agricultural practices, without disturbing the ecosystem or the productivity of host areas.

Opportunities

- Vietnam handicrafts has much potentials
- the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development has adopted policies to promote the establishment of craft villages in the direction of rural industrialisation and modernisation
- The State will provide support in the form of capital and technology.
- Vietnam has set itself the target of helping to develop a particular craft in each village, which should help generate a large part of the village's annual income.

Why handicraft village based tourism?

- Higher prices for handicraft products-> villagers' income increase
- Marketing reason: more tourists know the products and they will buy more handicraft products in their countries
- Job creation for local communities and poverty alleviation
- Preservation of tradition

Constraints in handicraft village based devopment

- Be beset with some difficulties such as the lack of a market development strategy and poor marketing ability
- Inadequate Authority and Disharmony in Development
- Legislation Problems
- Lack of Manpower
- Insufficient Financial Support
- Lack of Local Involvement
- Lack of linkages between tour operators and villages

Major issues related to handicraft development

- Production organisation and design work are fragmented, dependent heavily on individual effort with traditional experience and lacking in State assistance in terms of training and information provision.
- Quality of products : diversified quality and it is difficult to produce high quality, high skilled products that is difficult to sell at high price
- Lack of update information about technique, market demand as well as product promotion

Major issues (continued)

- Lack of essential treating policy for the craftsmen especially the famous ones who make valuable contribution
- Low education of workers (difficult to approach new technique, how to balance tradition preservation and handicraft development?)
- Brands/Trade mark and patent for products (trade mark, copyright for product/industrial design)
- Related authorities at all level are concerned with the development of handicraft tourism based village?

Major issues related to handicraft development

- Securing materials for production
- Market information system to disseminate pricing and consumption information to villagers
- Many craft villages have not paid due attention to conservational issues and public awareness of developing craft villages in harmony with environmental hygiene is still poor.

How to develop handicraft village
based tourism?



Governmental Initiatives

- Organization and Management Strategies
- Consideration of inter-departmental coordinating bodies concerned with tourism development at the local level.
- Consideration of the creation of tourism marketing and development boards and councils.
- Appointment of full-time tourism officers to assist and coordinate national, regional and local product development processes.

Tourism planning

- Inventory and assessment of actual/potential tourism handicrafts products for their poverty reduction potential.
- Incorporation of pro poor tourism concerns into larger handicrafts development plans.
- Development of tourism destination plans including visitor management strategies in handicraft villages
- Assessment of the community's capacity to absorb tourism(in handicraft villages)

The Development of Marketing and Information Approaches for Handicraft Villages

- All stakeholders must be aware of a handicraft village's tourism products and potential.
- Assembly and analysis of all available tourism marketing information for handicrafts villages
- Identification of realistic market segments (for tourists) to support poverty alleviation initiatives . Pro poor oriented tourism products and experiences must be packaged appropriately for target markets.
- Working with all stakeholders to define a village's brands of handicraft products and positions.
- Regional strategies for marketing and promotion to encourage coordination between various tourism entities.

Ensuring Stakeholders Involvement

- Village must develop strategies for involving the poor in pro poor policy development and implementation.
- Multi-stakeholder involvement in poverty reduction should be facilitated.

The use of local resources and services should be the guiding principle for product development

- Tourism handicraft products should be developed in consultation with local communities and should be based on what they would like to offer to visitors.
- Establishing local professional companies to pave the way for tourism to develop in depth
- There is a need to involve the commercial sector from the outset as they play an essential role in the marketing process.
- Market segments that support poverty reduction should be identified.

How to develop products?

- Product development must ensure that authenticity of local culture should not deteriorate.
- Tourists should be encouraged to buy and use locally produced goods and services.
- Information technologies should be fully utilized in promoting handicraft /tourism based villages (website/portal..).

How to foster tourism in handicrafts villages?

- Carry out the restoration and **development** of traditional **handicraft** occupations of the folk cultural activities for the sake of building a good environment of cultural tourism
- Improve road condition/review tourism conditions in craft villages . Craft villages must be efficient economicall, socially and environmentally
- Renovate temples/pagodas in the villages.
- Develop campaign program promoting craft village as cultural tourism destinations

How to foster tourism..(con't)

- Tour operators
 - How to design tours/specialized tours for tourists who are interested in handicraft and traditional method of production(such as artists, fine art students, professors both domestic and international)
 - Income and profit? How to divide income/ profits between tour operators and the village?
 - Craft information system at provincial level/village level
 - Showroom/museum of products produced by master artisans

How to foster tourism (con't)

- Collecting sagas/stories of artisans collection for visitors
- Improving/providing basic services in the villages (good restaurant/internet..). Enhance existing tour to attract more tourists and prolong their visit
- Establish training courses/design promotion center. Vocational training schools and businesses are encouraged to work closely with artisans to provide on-the-spot training for craftsmen, as well as courses on marketing and management at craft villages.

How to preserve tradition?

- Efforts should be made to diversify tourism products to increase overall attractions and ensure distribution of benefits to a wide segment of society.
- Local entertainments (dance, music, drama, fairs, festivals) as well as local cuisines should be promoted for preservation of local culture and income generation

How to preserve tradition(con't)

- Copyright protection and issue special mark for qualified products?
- Organising competition among craftsperson regularly(with high value prize)
- Trade fair and skills exchange
- Establish craft artisan fund for training young workers

How to preserve tradition (continued)

- Promote cooperation among master artisans
- Develop raw material resources
- Restore traditional technique
- Vocational training schools and businesses are encouraged to work closely with artisans to provide on-the-spot training for craftsmen, as well as courses on marketing and management at craft villages.

Conclusion !

- Vision and targets?
- Goals and objectives of craft development?
- Implementation and action plans?

References

- Craft master plan of Ha Tay province
- Research on craft development master plan under the context of rural industrialization in Vietnam (Ministry of Rural and Agriculture Development (project funded by JICA)
- United Nations economics and social commission for Asia and the Pacific (*Seminar on Poverty Alleviation through Sustainable Tourism Development 26-28 August 2003*)