

The Community of “Punyee Island” After the National Tourism Policy

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Abstract

This research aimed to study the changes and impact of tourism on way of life and adaptation of people in the community of “Punyee Island” after the government has implemented the policy on tourism promotion.

The qualitative method was used to serve the objectives by collecting data from secondary sources, in-depth interview of selected “Punyee” community members and observation.

The results revealed that tourism industry at “Punyee Island” has started after the government announced this island to be the national park conservation for tourism. Before this policy has implemented, the “Punyee people” were relied on natural resources for self-sufficient and family network among relatives. They have their own identity in terms of ethnic-culture, strictly religious practice and obeyed of religious leader. But after tourism industry came to this island, the socio-economic has changed the people’s way of life in terms of changing occupation from fishery to merchant and services labor; less relationship among relatives and less restriction of the religious practice and local culture. Community members emphasized to work for their own benefits. Although the economic of this island has developed rapidly but it was considered by the community members that it was not sustainable development. Since the Tsunami disaster “Punyee Island” has faced with economic downturn and the people here were questioned of their own identity.

The suggestions for the government are to review the government policy direction on tourism promotion by studying the potential and readiness of the communities before implementing policy; promoting of cooperation among public, private and community, including preserve local culture and identity of the people in the Punyee community.