

## การท่องเที่ยวในมิติเศรษฐกิจพอเพียง

### Tourism in the Sufficiency Economy Dimension

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#### บทคัดย่อ

วัตถุประสงค์ของบทความนี้เพื่อศึกษาการประยุกต์ใช้ศาสตร์พระราชาของพระบาทสมเด็จพระปรมินทรมหาภูมิพลอดุลยเดช เรื่อง ปรัชญาของเศรษฐกิจพอเพียงและการเกษตรทฤษฎีใหม่กับหลักการท่องเที่ยวอย่างยั่งยืนในสังคมชาวนา ซึ่งทำให้เกิดรูปแบบใหม่ของการท่องเที่ยวในมิติเศรษฐกิจพอเพียงและวิเคราะห์ผลผลิตและผลลัพธ์เพิ่มคุณค่าโดยการศึกษาอย่างต่อเนื่องเป็นเวลา 9 ปี (พ.ศ. 2550-2559) ด้วยการลงพื้นที่จริง ทดลองปฏิบัติจริงในสถานประกอบการและศึกษาข้อมูลจากพื้นที่กลุ่มตัวอย่างหลายแห่งในประเทศไทย ผลการศึกษาพบว่า ในพื้นที่ขนาดเล็กประมาณ 5 ไร่ การทำนาอย่างเดียวยังมีรายได้

น้อยที่สุดและต้องขายข้าวเปลือกซื้ออาหารบริโภค การทำการเกษตรทฤษฎีใหม่มีรายได้ดีกว่าและมีผลผลิตบริโภคลดค่าใช้จ่าย การท่องเที่ยวในมิติเศรษฐกิจพอเพียงมีรายได้ดีที่สุด เพราะมีรายได้จากการท่องเที่ยว ผลผลิตจากการเกษตรเพื่อบริโภคและเพื่อขาย และเป็นการลดรายจ่ายเพิ่มรายได้

### **Abstract**

The objective of this article was to study the application of the Sufficiency Economy and the New Agricultural Theory initiated by His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej to the principle of sustainable tourism in the farming society, creating sufficiency economy tourism and to analyze how productive and value-added by continuing research for 9 years (2007–2016) in actual areas and hands on in fields with an investigation in various sample areas in Thailand. The study findings revealed that in a two-acre land, growing only rice yielded the least income and some of the rice had to be sold to buy food. When the theory was applied in the same area, the yield was higher with better income and reduction of expenditure. Tourism in the sufficiency economy dimension was the best alternative with much higher income. Agricultural production was sufficient for consumption with surplus for sale, leading to reduction in other expenditure.

**Keywords:** Sustainable Tourism, Sufficiency Economy,  
The New Agricultural Theory

### **Introduction**

Socio-economic, scientific and technological developments as well as the end of the Cold War in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century had galvanized new technologies and innovations during the process of national developments, creating a social and economic gap between developed and developing countries and rich and poor nations. Furthermore, there had been continuous and great environmental

destruction since the Industrial Revolution and the advent of capitalism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century up until today.

Tourism is a by-product of the capitalist economic system nourished by scientific and technological progress as well as world peace. In addition, higher education has created both the push and pull factors, changing general tourism into more mass tourism that tends to become economy-oriented without much consideration on its negative social and environmental impacts.

The data from the World Tourism Organization (WTO) revealed that there were 25 million international tourists in 1950, rising rapidly to 166 million in 1970, 687 million in 2000, and 937 million in 2010. It is projected that there will be 1,400 million in 2020 and 1,800 million in 2030 respectively.

The rapid expansion of mass tourism has brought about economic dominance of developed countries over natural resources and economic systems of developing countries. Capitalism creates chain or franchised systems on accommodation, transportation, food and beverages, and touring.

A huge portion of tourism-related benefits is in the hand of international and national investors rather than that of villagers or peasants. Besides, being economically and disproportionately exploited, the latter has also lost social capital, such as natural resources and cultures to the former without any dispute.

To sustainably protect the motherland, social heritage and cultural diversity, Chiang Mai Rajabhat University, Mae Hong Son Campus, developed a Tourism and Sufficiency Economy course in 2007 for children of peasants to study as a guideline to protect and conserve their social and natural resources for their future generations.

## **Sustainable Tourism**

The concept of sustainable tourism was conceived about 20 years ago (after 1992) or after the fossilization of the sustainable development concept around 1987, referring to a development that meets the needs of present generation but still maintains the needs of future generations. Three aspects of development must be complementary with one another: economy, environment (natural resources, biodiversity, air, water, noise, or waste) and society (arts and culture). The development must sustainably meet the needs of humans today as well as those of future generations (Blackburn, 2007; Holden, 2008; and McCool & Moisey, 2009). Sustainable tourism derived its concept from sustainable development by implementing the three aspects of development

Sloan, Legrand and Chen (2009) define sustainable tourism as a type of tourism that manages the entire resources to meet the socio-economic and aesthetic needs of human beings while maintaining and conserving cultures, ecological stability, biodiversity, and other living beings.

Weaver (2007) defines sustainable tourism as a kind of tourism which creates low impact on natural resources, environment and local cultures while contributing to income distribution and local employment.

World Trade Organization (WTO) (2010) specifies seven aspects of sustainable tourism management as follows.

1. Carrying capacity; tourism management must be in the range of socio-economic, psychological and environmental capacities
2. Local needs and participation of benefits. Tourism management must be in line with the needs of local communities and benefits generated must be fairly and evenly participated and distributed.
3. Quality experience. Tourism activities must provide rich and quality experience to guests.
4. Learning and understanding. Tourists should be able to learn and understand tourism resources and local people as well as their cultures.



5. Nature and local architecture. Facilities must be designed to reflect or assimilate with local nature or architecture, utilizing local materials.

6. Integrated development. Sustainable tourism should be integrated into development plans at the local, regional and national levels.

7. Database. A tourism database should be established to be used as a tool to monitor and assess decision making.

In 2007, Association of Thai Tour Operators (ATTO) jointly set up a new guideline for sustainable tourism management as follows (Bramwell, 2007).

1. Tourism must protect the environment (plants, animals, geography, etc.).
2. Tourism must respect local cultures.
3. Tourism must generate benefits to local communities.
4. Tourism must conserve natural resources.
5. Tourism must cause the least pollution (air, water, noise, and waste).

In 2008, the United Nations Foundation, the World Tourism Organization and 27 concerned organizations established criteria for sustainable tourism which can be summarized as follows.

1. The management system must be efficient so as to achieve the goals of sustainable tourism.
2. Sustainable tourism must generate optimal socio-economic benefits to local communities with minimal negative impacts.
3. Sustainable tourism must generate optimal benefits to local cultural heritage with minimal negative impacts.
4. Sustainable tourism must generate optimal benefits to local environment with minimal negative impacts.

Tourism businesses including touring, hotels, food and beverages, souvenirs, transportation, and other related operations tend to be organized with the goal of achieving sustainable tourism. Organizing local tourism activities should be in line with those of developed countries. Other tourism activities in areas of

the New Agricultural Theory with the incorporation of the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy are a way to achieve the goal of sustainable tourism with the balance of economic benefits and social and environmental conservation.

### **The New Agricultural Theory**

Before 1987, Thai society was fundamentally agricultural. After the expansion of capitalism and industry taking over agriculture, farming production factors like land were sold to the industrial sector, with more farmers becoming wage earners in industrial plants and creating employment for specialized production. The one-man-producing-many-products method in the peasant society was changed into a holistic capitalistic production method in assembly lines, using more imported machines to replace human labor. The laissez-faire system enabled investors to freely get what they wanted. Capitalism with support from political power greatly contributed to structural changes of irrigated agricultural system. Such a development started in the reign of King Rama V (1868–1910) and was more pronounced in the 1961 National Social and Economic Development Plan until today. Irrigated agricultural land has been developed into industrial estates, land business centers, industrial plants, and new housing projects. National developments have brought about more negative impacts on society, culture, natural resources, and the environment, due to modernization without being based on traditional social foundation.

The Four Administrative Pillars in the Thai society before westernized development since 1892 emphasized that *Wiang* (Interior Ministry), *Wang* (Royal Affairs), *Khlang* (Treasury), and *Na* (Agriculture) were crucial to the social structure. After the establishment of the Ministry of Agriculture, irrigation system, livestock and farming practices were developed, indicating that the country is located in the tropical rainforest and monsoon zone, suitable to become an



agricultural society and being developed continuously in accordance with innovations while maintaining the traditional way of life.

The tropical and monsoon zone contains biodiversity, suitable for subsistence agriculture to feed the world's population. The history of colonization indicated that the monsoon land in Asia was abundant with biodiversity and should be colonized to produce agricultural products to feed the lacking European population during the period of Mercantilism (1557–1757) or before capitalism.

Social changes have affected the conventional agricultural system and the irrigation system has not been thorough, resulting in insufficient water supplies. The advent of imported technology together with commercial agricultural system has made Thai farmers to become “victims” of the “predators” in the merciless capitalism.

King Rama IX had always been interested in and concerned about the livelihoods of his subjects since his ascension to the throne in 1946. From 1952 to 1967, he had traveled the country in the initial stage. During his reign, he had visited and helped people of all walks of life, particularly poor people in rural areas, attempting to improve their quality of life as well as local infrastructure.

His initiative about “sufficiency” at the family level before entering into community economy and commercial production is involved with “The New Agricultural Theory”. The concept was first conceived in 1988 when he asked officers of the Chaipattana Foundation under His Royal Patronage to buy a 16–2–23-rai plot of land next to Mongkol Chai Pattana Temple, Tambon Huay Bong, Chalem Phrakiat District, Sara Buri Province. A water pond was dug as a water supply source. In 1992, a 15–2–24-rai plot was purchased and given to the project, making a total land plot of 34–0–47 rai, in order to conduct a new agricultural theory to help local communities depend on themselves (Kulawathanaworaphong, 2001). There are three stages of the new theory: self-reliance, independence, and interdependence (Samuthawanich, 1999).

The new agricultural theory is the empowerment of farmers to maximally manage and exploit their 10-to-15-rai land per family with the availability of water supplies all year round. The land should be divided into four sections according to land use.

30% for a pond as a water supply source

30% for paddy cultivation for family consumption

30% for integrated farming for consumption and sales of surplus

10% for residence

His Majesty the King initiated and experimented with the new theory in three steps (Chaipattana Foundation, 2017).

The New Theory: Step 1

- 1) A small land ownership of a farmer, about 15 rai (6 acres)
- 2) The main concept is that farmers can become self-sufficient.
- 3) Sufficient rice for annual consumption in a 5-rai section
- 4) Water supply all year round with 1,000 m<sup>3</sup> per rai. Approximately 10,000 m<sup>3</sup> is required for an annual use. A pond with 3 rai in width and 3 meters in depth can contain about 19,000 m<sup>3</sup> of water, which is sufficient for the family consumption and farming.
- 5) Water must be replenished to replace the evaporated amounts. It is estimated that one centimeter of water evaporates everyday.
- 6) It is necessary to have additional water sources to effectively carry out the new theory farming practices.
- 7) A pond or reservoir will be a rain regulator, storing water when it is in demand.
- 8) One major problem is a high investment cost. Consequently, farmers must be assisted by state or private agencies.

The New Theory: Step 2





After the demonstration at the service center was completed, interested farmers implemented in their respective land. At this step, the farmers may form into a cooperative group to help one another in terms of:

- 1) Production (seeds, soil preparation, irrigation)
- 2) Marketing (rice storage, milling, drying rice, sales)
- 3) Livelihood (household necessities)
- 4) Welfare (public health, loan)
- 5) Education (schools, scholarships)
- 6) Society and religion with collaboration from foundations, state and private agencies

#### The New Theory: Step 3

The group should collaborate with banks for loans, petrol companies for oil, rice mills, and collectively help manage their cooperative for investment and improvement of the quality of their lives. Both farmers and their investors will receive mutual benefits. For instance, farmers can sell their produce at a higher price and investors can buy raw materials from farmers at a lower price. In addition, farmers can buy consumer items at a lower price from their cooperative shop.

Activities and land division may vary according to social and geographical contexts, based on the three steps and the sufficiency economy philosophy.

### **The Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy**

The sufficiency economy is a new term brought into public attention first by HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej on the occasion of his birthday anniversary speech on December 4, 1996, and repeatedly stressed on the same occasions in 1997, 1998, 1999, and 2000, due to the country's economic crisis because of mismanagement of capitalism.

Self-sufficiency economy is an economic system where production was paid as tributes and taxes and workers had no land rights ownership. Small surpluses were owned by workers or producers and a barter trade for scarce or valuable items was practiced. Trade was lightly conducted (Piren, 1992).

Socio-culturally, workers or commoners were loyal to their masters or lords in a form of the patronage system. Religion was the spiritual center of social members for their peaceful co-existence.

However, the self-sufficiency economy or Feudalism in European and Asian histories were mired with wars and social conflicts. Thai society in the past was no difference in the production system from other countries, regarding land ownership, loyalty between commoners and their lords, and religious principles. Feudalism and self-sufficiency economy started to change in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, gradually becoming mercantilism in the 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, and capitalism in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Thailand was obliged to practice *laissez faire* in mid 19<sup>th</sup> century by the Bowring Treaty. Nevertheless, social adjustments with the abolishment of slavery and the construction of production infrastructure to accommodate capitalism were conducted in late 19<sup>th</sup> century to early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Human resources development was a major hurdle to adjust to capitalism, technological innovations, and a new education system.

Western-style modernization of the country had brought about political coups and social and economic inequality. The need to modernize the country of the government and a section of the population implementing this state policy had weakened a once-closely-knitted community, causing continuous but slight resistance against modernization by internal drives (Natsupa, 2013).

The creation of the philosophy of sufficiency economy in 2007 was based on socio-economic, political, cultural, religious, and environmental considerations with a mixture of traditional contexts and new technologies to create an innovation



called sufficiency economy and the new agricultural theory or sufficiency–economy–based practicum. The new kind of economy helps us to be sufficient without further difficulties (HM the King’s speech on December 4, 1998, cited in Kulawathanaworaphong, 2001).

Sufficiency has a far–reaching meaning, not confined to being sufficient for personal consumption at the moment but for the future of the country where everyone has enough to sustain life. Sufficiency means having a balanced and happy livelihood without being extravagant. Self–sufficiency may refer to producing enough for consumption and being self–dependent. When people are sufficient, they are content with what they have and less greedy. When they are less greedy, they tend not to inflict upon others. If everyone were content, not to the extreme or too greedy, we would be all happy. Nonetheless, you can be sufficient and extravagant provided that you do not inflict upon others. You speak, act and practice at a sufficient level. As a consequence, sufficiency means being moderate and logical (HM the King’s speech on December 4, 1998).

Sufficiency economy is neither an armor to prevent capitalism nor a weapon to fight against an invasion of enemies. It is a guideline for business and livelihood based on traditional socio–economic, religious, cultural, and environmental elements amidst the modernization trends of the country. Sufficiency economy is a middle path on budget, logics and immunity that depend on the combination of knowledge and morality in order to lead our lives and the country to a sustainable and balanced socio–economic and environmental development.

The economy according to the royal initiative can be categorized into two major types as follows.

1. Sufficiency economy is an ability of an urban community, a state, a country, or a region to produce products and services for consumption without depending on external factors.

2. Sufficiency economy at an individual level is an ability of a person to lead a sustainable and moderate life, free from any materialistic bondage and without being subject to a capitalistic lifestyle. It is thus to lead a moderate life.

There are five aspects of sufficiency economy

1. Spiritual aspect. A self-sufficient person is creative for himself and his nation, compassionate, compromising, and public-minded.

2. Social aspect. Community members help one another, are interdependent, strong and free.

3. Natural resource and environmental aspect. Resources are wisely exploited and managed as well as value-added, based on the principle of sustainability.

4. Technological aspect. The influx of new technologies must be carefully screened to serve the real needs and should be based on local wisdom. Additionally, new technology should be developed, based on the wisdom.

5. Economic aspect. In the past, economic development focused on increasing incomes, not on reducing expenditure. In time of economic crises, the focus should be on expenditure reduction, based on sufficient lifestyle.

A King's speech observed that if only one fourth of the population collectively implemented sufficiency economy, our country would be able to survive all crises (Kulawathanaworaphong, 2001).

The principle of sufficiency economy is based on social foundation of the past being applied to the principle of sustainable development in the present in attempt for security and survival of human beings.

Knowledge is one of the most important elements to equally co-exist with others. However, knowledge without morality would result in suppression,



overexploitation, corruption, and destruction of the global environment. As a consequence, knowledge must be accompanied by morality, leading a life in the middle path; that is, sufficient for oneself, family, community and country, being reasonable in all actions, making decisions based on intelligence and data, and being self-immune with religious and moral principles.

The principle of sufficiency economy is easy to understand, but difficult to implement for those without the middle path and morality (Phonphit, 2007). In order to survive, current businesses must utilize knowledge and technology suitably. But, to survive in the long run, morality must be strictly enforced.

### **Tourism and sufficiency economy**

Sufficiency economy-oriented tourism is derived from a conceptual combination of sustainable tourism, the sufficiency economy philosophy, the New Agricultural Theory, and peasantry. This type of tourism refers to sustainable tourism in combination with tourism business operations based on the sufficiency economy principles. The tourism activities are suitable for peasant tourism activities where farming activities are combined with homestays based on local materials and cultures in combination with modern technology, health-related food and beverages, souvenir shops, health services, and touring services. The activities should be in line with local wisdom with the utilization of technology to create innovations that satisfy consumers and are in accordance with sustainable tourism.

The development of tourism in the past fifty years (up to 2007) had brought about economic progress, cultural revival and conservation, a great increase in the numbers of tourists, and an improvement of tourism-related services to the world standard. Nonetheless, urban communities have received more benefits than their rural counterparts have, despite the latter being the owners of natural and cultural resources. One weakness is that rural communities

have not been empowered to negotiate equally and justly with the expansion of tourism benefits. Furthermore, they have not been equipped with necessary tourism knowledge and community tourism is mostly seasonal, for instance, winter for the North and summer for coastal areas. For big cities, tourism activities can be conducted all year round.

The first phenomenon is that tourism activities for small communities are packed only during festivals or on a seasonal basis, not all year round.

The second phenomenon is that outsiders have bought up agricultural production factors from communities and invested in tourism businesses. Hence, agriculture or traditional careers have been abandoned because villagers have turned to tourism businesses, causing socio-cultural and environmental collapses due to unsustainable development.

The third phenomenon is that, when tourism is seasonal, small businesses are operated at a loss because of a shortage of capital. The question is how an educational institute with a tourism program could help small local communities. Students are from communities with tourism resources and tourism is also seasonal. Why didn't we develop a program that was in line with local contexts and developed tourism-related vocations where students could learn about both local and universal tourism systems? For instance, they learned about management of small and large hotels, focusing on local careers, e.g., highland agriculture, freshwater fisheries, or designs of souvenirs, as well as tourism industry.

Students are able to own small businesses under local production factors that are both strengths and opportunities, e.g., seaside, mountains, rivers, or rice fields. They own small businesses in the initial stage because tourism is seasonal for them. Therefore, they need to have other occupations along with tourism-related ones.

With the above reasons, the Tourism and Sufficiency Economy Program for undergraduate students at Chiang Mai Rajabhat University, Mae Hong Son Campus, was conceived in 2007. The program is in accordance with local socio-geographical aspects and trust in sufficiency economy and the New Agricultural Theory of His Majesty the King that it would be a guideline for sustainable and balanced socio-economic, cultural and environmental developments, as well as for being ready for change.

Tourism activities in combination with the royal initiatives on Sufficiency Economy and the New Agricultural Theory would empower community economy in the long term (Natsupha, 2010; Na Pomphet, 2006; Phongphit, 2007)

Community activities may include integrated farming activities and/or fisheries as major occupations, and tourism activities are their supplementary careers, since tourism is seasonal for rural communities. The activities may include eco-lodge camping sites, spas & saunas using local herbs and traditional massage, touring, and souvenir sales.

Resorts and spas can be turned into health centers, providing space for exercise and yoga, healthy food and beverages, and meditation.

Touring in communities can be interesting, visiting natural and cultural attractions like temples, archeological sites, forest ecology, or sea trips. Organizing cultural activities can attract tourists to participate in traditional ceremonies, cultural performances, or festivals.

Sales of local souvenirs can be attractive. The products are made from local materials by local craftsmen and are local cultural identities. Souvenirs are bought as reminders of visited places or as keep tokens for relatives and friends.

Organizing community tourism activities can be done in various ways as long as they are suitable for local environment and at a small scale, since community tourism is usually seasonal. It is important to take a middle path, be

sufficient (agriculture is our principal career), reasonable (data-based decision making), financially immune, knowledgeable, and moral in livelihood.

As evidence to support the notion that tourism and sufficiency economy outweigh other types of production, it is clearly illustrated in the following table.

Production types	Area (rai)	Annual income (baht)
Rice cultivation only	10 rais (4 Acres)	118,000
The New Theory	10 rais (4 Acres)	653,374
Tourism and Sufficiency Economy	5 rais (2 Acres)	2,406,000

## Conclusion

From practical experiences on tourism and sufficiency economy and the New Agricultural Theory in over 30 peasant societies in the upper northern region as well as a study trip to Khiriwong Village, Pak Phanang River Basin, Nakhon Sri Thammarat Province, together with an experiment of the New Agricultural Theory in my own land and a five-year experience with the management of a Thai cooking school for foreigners, the evidential data that in a small plot of land not exceeding 2 acres located in a suburban or rural area with only seasonal activities can be concluded that:

1. The New Agricultural Theory is better than single crop agriculture in socio-economic and environmental terms.
2. Tourism and sufficiency economy is better than solely new agricultural practices in socio-economic and environmental terms.
3. Tourism and sufficiency economy can generate two sources of incomes (agriculture and tourism). It can also prevent business risks and can be practical at family, community and national levels, depending on individual sufficiency.



4. Tourism and sufficiency economy are in line with current and future trends of tourism.

As a consequence, tourism and sufficiency economy is sustainable tourism based on the royal initiatives and local wisdom. It should be widely promoted for the benefits of human beings.

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