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SUSTAINING CULTURE AND LIVELIHOODS THROUGH COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM: A CASE STUDY OF BAN KHLONG BANG PHAI, NONTHABURI PROVINCE, THAILAND

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ABSTRACT

This research employs a qualitative case study method to explore Ban Khlong Bang Phai's potential for community-based tourism (CBT). During data analysis, a range of methods were employed, including focus groups, surveys of domestic and foreign tourists, participant observation, and document analysis, involving approximately 20 key informants. The accuracy was checked by the thematic analysis, followed by member-checking. Cultural and natural resources, including water-hyacinth basket weaving, temple ceremonies, indigenous cuisine, and canal-based agriculture, are important for the development of CBT in Ban Khlong Bang Phai. This investigation highlights the community development and empowerment, with women's organisations and youth adults actively participating in workshops and digitally promoting experiences, although elder community members are involved in conserving the traditional narratives. Tourists praised the hands-on and engaging events, but also pointed out concerns about the infrastructure and accessibility. Insufficient finance, shortages in professional training, and poor marketing are some of the challenges, but there are also opportunities to leverage make use of digital platforms, build strategic collaborations, and implement sustainable development techniques. This research emphasises the importance of striking a balance between authenticity, inclusion, and innovation, and it makes practical recommendations for participatory planning, capacity-building, and tourist programs that are culturally relevant. These findings support theoretical insights into the dynamics of peri-urban CBT, which helps the policy and development initiatives for sustainable tourism in Thailand and other comparable surroundings.

KEYWORDS: Community Involvement, Peri-Urban Context, Cultural and Natural Assets, Sustainability, And Digital Strategies.

1. INTRODUCTION

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) is one of the popular models for sustainable tourism and development among the local communities by maintaining the cultural traditions and natural environment. While traditional mass tourism has large-scale operators and external investors, CBT focuses on grassroots engagement, collective decision-making, and equitable sharing of economic benefits between community members (Giampiccoli & Saayman, 2018). The principles of CBT include the broader worldwide conversations on sustainable development, cultural heritage preservation, and equitable growth, which become beneficial for enticing solutions for places that aim to reconcile economic potential with social and ecological commitments (Manyara & Jones, 2021).

CBT has become one of the important approaches in developing an effective means to strengthen the underprivileged groups, renewing traditional methods, and generating against tourism's potentially exploitative character worldwide. In the surroundings of Africa and Latin America, CBT initiatives reduce poverty and increase rural development, and permit the small groups to utilise the cultural and natural resources, which can be helpful for both local people and visitors (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009).

In the same way, the CBT programme has been enabled in rural parts of Nepal, Indonesia, and Vietnam to develop the local economic opportunities by preserving the endangered ecosystem and indigenous cultural practices (Kontogeorgopoulos et al. 2014). CBT have also been used to promote local identity, develop intercultural communication and create more equitable tourist frameworks. Moreover, CBT has its own challenges; on the commercialisation of culture, and the sustainability of its advantages (Blackstock, 2005; Zapata et al., 2011).

In Thailand, Community-Based Tourism (CBT) has become increasingly important as part of the nation's wider efforts to diversify its tourism offerings and lessen reliance on heavily trafficked tourist hubs like Bangkok, Phuket, and Chiang Mai. The Thai government has progressively included CBT in its policy strategies, with the most recent example being the National Tourism Development Plan (2023–2027), which focuses on community involvement, heritage preservation, and sustainable management of resources (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2023). CBT in Thailand is advocated as a method to spread tourist activity to lesser-known regions, easing the burden on crowded destinations and providing more equitable economic

opportunities for rural and peri-urban communities (Wattanacharoensil & Schuckert, 2022). Illustrative case studies from both northern and southern Thailand show how CBT initiatives have effectively safeguarded traditional crafts, rituals, and agricultural practices, all while generating income for local families (Kontogeorgopoulos, 2021). Despite these achievements, the application of Community-Based Tourism (CBT) in Thailand varies significantly. Numerous communities lack essential skills in areas such as hospitality management, marketing, and infrastructure development, which impedes their capacity to attract and retain visitors. Additionally, while rural CBT has been fairly well explored, peri-urban CBT—especially in regions close to Bangkok—remains inadequately studied (Pearce, 2015). Peri-urban areas, located at the boundary of rural and urban settings, are often defined by mixed cultural identities, swift socio-economic changes, and environmental challenges associated with urban growth (Simon, 2008). These distinct dynamics influence both the advantages and difficulties faced by CBT. On one side, peri-urban communities offer greater accessibility to urban tourists looking for brief cultural experiences; on the flip side, they are at risk of losing their cultural authenticity due to urban expansion, commercialisation, and shifts in generational livelihoods (Douglas, 2014).

Nonthaburi Province illustrates the complexities of peri-urban areas. Situated next to Bangkok, Nonthaburi has historically been referred to as the “muddy city” due to its productive soils and extensive waterways that facilitate agriculture, especially in fruit orchards and cultivation along canals (Panyadee, 2019). In recent decades, swift urbanization has altered much of Nonthaburi's landscape, with an increasing prevalence of residential developments, infrastructure growth, and industrial activities. However, in spite of being close to the capital, Nonthaburi maintains unique cultural and artisanal practices, including temple festivities, floating markets, and crafts like basket weaving using water hyacinth. These cultural elements exist alongside contemporary lifestyles, forming a socio-cultural blend that reflects peri-urban hybridity rather than fitting neatly into the categories of rural or urban (Kuhonta, 2017).

Ban Khlong Bang Phai, located by a canal in Nonthaburi, exemplifies a community rich in cultural and natural assets that could serve as the foundation for a strong community-based tourism (CBT) initiative. The village is locally recognized for its traditional basket weaving, rituals connected to its

temples, and homegrown culinary traditions, which collectively create a compelling cultural identity. Furthermore, its canal surroundings provide potential for agro-tourism, eco-tourism, and cultural immersion activities. However, Ban Khlong Bang Phai has yet to be incorporated into mainstream tourism routes, often overlooked in favor of more famous attractions in Bangkok and nearby provinces. This relative obscurity highlights both a challenge and an opportunity: while the community lacks exposure and proper infrastructure, it also maintains a cultural authenticity that could be effectively harnessed through CBT.

The socio-economic environment of Ban Khlong Bang Phai highlights the need to investigate opportunities for community-based tourism (CBT). Similar to numerous peri-urban areas, residents encounter challenges related to economic instability, with many young individuals migrating to cities for job prospects, leaving an aging demographic behind. Agricultural livelihoods are pressured by environmental issues like canal water pollution and economic challenges from competition with industrial food production. Additionally, local artisans and cultural workers are worried about the loss of traditional knowledge and practices, which may disappear without being passed down through generations (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2022). If developed with care, tourism has the potential to rejuvenate these traditions by creating financial incentives for their conservation, while also providing supplementary income that supports, rather than overrides, existing livelihoods.

From a tourist's viewpoint, places like Ban Khlong Bang Phai and similar peri-urban areas attract visitors due to their offer of genuine cultural experiences near Bangkok. Studies show that contemporary travelers—especially urban middle-class individuals from the domestic market and international tourists looking for cultural immersion—are increasingly driven by the desire for experiential learning, meaningful engagements, and involvement in local customs (Su et al., 2020; Wattanacharoensil & Schuckert, 2022).

To fulfil these expectations, peri-urban Community-Based Tourism (CBT) initiatives should include systemic challenges such as insufficient transportation, poor signage, and a lack of marketing, and ensure the rise of tourists, which does not interrupt community cohesion or cultural authenticity (Okazaki, 2008).

Relevance and time are important in the CBT hotspot while investigating the capacity of Ban Khlong Bang Phai. Also, it provides an insightful

approach to Thailand's peri-urban CBT and a huge research space for the growth of urban areas. There is a distinct balance between authenticity, inclusion, and creativity by highlighting the community engagement, tourist experiences, and structural barriers in peri-urban CBT communities. These initiatives increase resilience, cultural pride, and long-term growth in the face of constant socioeconomic changes. It also generates job opportunities.

1.1. Objectives

1. To analyse Ban Khlong Bang Phai's cultural and environmental assets, which can be used as the foundation for the development of community-based tourism.
2. To explore community participation and empowerment in tourism planning, with attention to the roles of women, youth, and elder residents.
3. To examine tourist perceptions of immersive experiences and assess their views on infrastructure, accessibility, and overall satisfaction.
4. To analyse the challenges and opportunities of CBT development in Ban Khlong Bang Phai, focusing on funding, training, marketing, digital platforms, and sustainable practices.

2. LITERATURE REVIEWS

The concept of community-based tourism (CBT) is often integrated with Peter Murphy's Publication: A Community Approach (1985), which was developed for positioning the tourist development as the main point. In previous research, a significant approach to community involvement in tourism is defined (Heenan, 1978; Loukissas, 1983; Murphy, 1983; Pizam, 1978). Murphy's (1985) systems approach suggests that connections exist between social, economic, and managerial factors. Frequently, CBT has become a more important approach for tourist development, which promotes equity, participation, and sustainability rather than mass-market expansion. Meanwhile, researchers mentioned the lack of agreement on the definition and application of CBT. Environmental sustainability, cultural protection, empowerment, fair benefit distribution and community ownership are the features executed in the CBT (Scheyvens, 2002; Goodwin & Santilli, 2009). Nevertheless, Beeton (2006) points out that misunderstanding occurs when "tourism in communities" is mixed up with "tourism by communities." While the former might happen in small, rural, or peri-urban regions, the latter assumes

real community participation in planning, decision-making, and profit sharing. Different conceptual frameworks have arisen to illustrate the diversity of CBT. Honggang, Sofield, and Jigang (2009) propose that CBT must be viewed as "communities benefiting through tourism," highlighting the importance of accessing current tourism markets instead of just ownership. In the same vein, Simpson (2008) presented "Community Benefit Tourism Initiatives" (CBTIs), wherein NGOs, governments, or private entities provide benefits without necessitating direct management from the community. This perspective expands the range of community involvement but may also weaken empowerment. Engagement continues to be a key yet debated concept in CBT. Brandon, Lindberg, and Hawkins (1993) along with Simmons (1994) emphasize that involvement validates tourism planning, enhances resource management, and promotes cultural identity. Nonetheless, critics like Henkel and Stirrat (2001) contend that participation has evolved into a "doctrine," frequently approached superficially while failing to tackle fundamental power dynamics. Pretty (1995) recognizes different types of participation, ranging from passive and manipulative involvement to self-mobilization, whereas Tosun (1999) points out "pseudo-participation," where community members are consulted but lack genuine decision-making authority. These limitations cast doubts on CBT's ability to bring about change. Blackstock (2005) criticizes CBT for ignoring the global and national structural disparities that influence tourism development.

Engagement is generally regarded as the cornerstone of CBT, yet its implementation differs. Arnstein's (1969) renowned "ladder of participation," originally used in urban planning, has impacted tourism researchers by differentiating between superficial and authentic participation. Expanding on this, pretty (1995) suggested a typology in which participation varies from passive information sharing to active self-organization. CBT aims to promote the latter, enhancing local empowerment and control. Empowerment serves as both a result and a process of involvement. Scheyvens (2002) outlines four aspects of empowerment within CBT: economic (better livelihoods and fair benefit distribution), psychological (boosted self-worth and pride), social (enhanced community unity), and political (increased impact on outside entities). In reality, accomplishing all four dimensions at the same time is difficult, especially when external organizations

control tourism planning. Research indicates both achievements and limitations of participation in CBT. Kontogeorgopoulos et al. (2014) discover that in Thai village tourism, empowerment varies significantly, with specific groups—like local elites or families with better networks—gaining an unequal share of benefits. In a similar vein, Rasoolimanesh et al. (2022) observe that while participation can enhance local legitimacy and sustainability, disparities in education, resources, and power frequently obstruct inclusivity. Involvement should also be seen in relation to wider socio-political environments. Tosun (2000) points out "obstacles to community involvement" in developing nations, such as centralized power, absence of legal structures, and inadequate financial means. These limitations are especially apparent in peri-urban areas where authority is divided between urban municipalities and rural administrations. Consequently, CBT professionals are increasingly promoting participatory planning that incorporates varied community perspectives, power-aware facilitation, and capacity-building efforts to tackle structural inequalities. (Giampiccoli & Saayman, 2018)

Tourism in peri-urban regions—areas located at the boundary between urban centers and rural landscapes—offers distinct possibilities and limitations. In contrast to rural tourism, peri-urban tourism is influenced by urban growth, land-use disputes, and shifts in demographics (Simon, 2008; Douglas, 2014). Pearce (2015) highlights that peri-urban areas frequently encounter issues like environmental decline, pressure on infrastructure, and cultural commercialization, as they are more susceptible to urban influences compared to distant rural regions. Peri-urban tourism is likewise marked by hybridity. It merges agricultural environments, traditional crafts, and cultural resources with growing closeness to urban consumer markets. This opens up possibilities for specialized experiences like agro-tourism, artisan villages, and eco-cultural excursions. Nonetheless, peri-urban regions frequently suffer from disjointed tourism management since they exist between urban authorities and rural administrations. (Wattanacharoensil & Schuckert, 2022). Peri-urban communities in Bangkok and Chiang Mai in Thailand are increasing in popularity, and they also have sustainability concerns. Issues faced by the canal-based tourism in peri-urban Bangkok, which include the waste management and loss of authenticity arising from the mass tourist activities Panyadee (2019).

Similarly, Wattanacharoensil and Schuckert

(2022) state that peri-urban tourism often prioritises the immediate economic rise and ignores environmental issues and cultural commodification. This research prioritises that in the peri-urban areas, such as Nonthaburi, the goal of CBT models is to enhance heritage preservation by inclusivity and environmental care. The digital approach has altered tourism marketing, which has both positive and negative aspects for CBT. Narratives, branding, and online platforms allow communities to present their heritage, crafts, and local ways of life to specific markets looking for genuine experiences (Giampiccoli & Saayman, 2018). Digital marketing supports Thailand's "Smart Tourism" initiative, promoting ICT integration in managing destinations (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2023). Digital tools can connect peri-urban communities to nearby cities while providing global exposure, assisting in attracting independent tourists and diaspora networks. Nonetheless, obstacles persist. Kunjuran and Hussin (2020) observe that the adoption of digital technology is inconsistent, as generational gaps and low digital literacy hinder community engagement. Furthermore, reliance on digital platforms can subject communities to external influence, algorithmic prejudices, and risks to their reputation. Rasoolimanesh et al. (2022) contend that in the absence of adequate training and institutional backing, digital marketing might only serve a limited number of stakeholders in the community. In peri-urban Thailand, developing digital skills in youth – often acting as “digital intermediaries” – can improve community branding and ensure equitable distribution of benefits.

Scheyvens (2002) highlights that gender empowerment in CBT encompasses more than just economic involvement; it also involves acknowledgement, esteem, and power within community frameworks. In Thailand, women have traditionally contributed to household income via

cottage industries, and CBT offers avenues for them to formalize these contributions (Kontogeorgopoulos, 2021). Nevertheless, gender disparities continue, as men tend to occupy positions of power in CBT committees. Generational dynamics hold equal significance. Manyara and Jones (2021) note that older generations preserve tradition by passing down rituals, narratives, and farming methods, whereas younger people increasingly function as intermediaries with tourists and digital technologies. This generational synergy can enhance CBT resilience, yet conflicts emerge when younger individuals prioritize commercialization, which older members view as a loss of culture. Sustainability continues to be a fundamental aspect of CBT, showcasing its connection to environmental stewardship and cultural conservation. Tolkach and King (2015) contend that CBT offers methods for sustainable resource utilization by integrating local knowledge into tourism activities. For instance, regulations on fishing, agriculture, or waste disposal commonly integrate into CBT activities. In addition to sustainability, resilience has become significant as a framework for evaluating CBT's capacity to cope with shocks and uncertainties. Hall et al. (2017) define resilience in tourism as the ability of socio-ecological systems to withstand disturbances, reorganize, and maintain critical functions. This is especially significant in peri-urban regions experiencing swift urban growth, climate shifts, and disease outbreaks. Rasoolimanesh et al. (2022) indicate that CBT supports various United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), such as poverty alleviation, gender equity, and sustainable communities. In peri-urban areas such as Ban Khlong Bang Phai, resilience frameworks are essential for tackling the environmental fragility of water bodies, reliance on urban markets, and susceptibility to external disruptions.

Table 1: Literature Themes, Gaps, And Research Questions.

Theme	Key Literature Findings	Gap / Limitation	Potential Research Questions
Community Participation	Participation enhances legitimacy, resource management, and identity (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2022). Challenges include power imbalances and lack of skills (Zapata et al., 2011).	Limited empirical studies on peri-urban Thai communities; unclear how participation functions in riverside contexts like Ban Khlong Bang Phai.	- How do residents participate in CBT planning and decision-making? - What barriers or enablers affect equitable participation?
Cultural Preservation & Authenticity	CBT supports cultural preservation and empowerment (Scheyvens & Biddulph, 2018).	Lack of evidence on how peri-urban cultural traditions are maintained for tourism.	- How can CBT preserve crafts, rituals, and identity? - Are there trade-offs between tourism and cultural integrity?

Economic Livelihoods	CBT keeps benefits local, reduces outmigration (Manyara & Jones, 2021).	Few studies quantify household impacts in peri-urban Thai contexts.	- What is CBT's contribution to household income? - How are benefits distributed among community members?
Tourist Experience & Satisfaction	Tourists value cultural immersion (Okazaki, 2008; Wattanacharoensil & Schuckert, 2022).	Little evidence on visitor perceptions of peri-urban CBT in Thailand.	- What are tourist expectations and satisfaction levels? - How does experience influence repeat visits?
Environmental & Resource Management	CBT linked to sustainable resource use (Tolkach & King, 2015).	Limited research on peri-urban canal ecosystems.	- How can CBT minimize environmental impacts? - What local practices support sustainability?
Digital Marketing	Social media increases visibility (Su et al., 2023).	Digital literacy gaps in peri-urban Thailand.	- How can communities use digital platforms inclusively? - What role do youth play as digital mediators?

Theme	Key Literature Findings	Gap / Limitation	Potential Research Questions
Gender & Generations	Women and youth play distinct roles (Scheyvens, 2002; Tucker & Boonabaana, 2012).	Lack of analysis on intergenerational collaboration in peri-urban CBT.	- How do gender and age affect participation? - What are generational tensions in CBT governance?
Sustainability & Resilience	CBT builds socio-ecological resilience (Hall et al., 2017).	Few case studies in peri-urban Southeast Asia.	- How does CBT enhance resilience in canal-based communities? - How do communities adapt to urbanization pressures?

Table 2: Comparison Of CBT Models in Asia.

Country	Governance & Participation	Economic Empowerment	Cultural Preservation	Digital Integration	Sustainability Practices
Thailand	Village committees, partnerships with NGOs and state agencies (Kontogeorgopoulos et al., 2014).	Income from homestays, handicrafts, and agro-tourism.	Focus on Buddhist rituals, artisanal crafts, canal life.	Emerging digital adoption via Facebook and TikTok.	Community rules on farming, canal management.
Indonesia	Community cooperatives, supported by NGOs (Cole, 2007).	Diversified benefits from eco-tourism and handicrafts.	Balinese Hindu rituals and village architecture central.	Strong Instagram-based promotion.	Integration of agroforestry and eco-tourism.
Vietnam	Local committees with state oversight (Ladkin & Nguyen, 2015).	Homestays and cultural shows; uneven distribution of benefits.	Ethnic minority traditions highlighted.	Limited digital use; reliant on tour operators.	Community forestry and water management.
Nepal	Tourism user groups manage trekking homestays (Lama, 2021).	Direct household benefits from trekking lodges.	Sherpa and Gurung cultural practices.	Strong online booking via international platforms.	Mountain ecosystem conservation, renewable energy.

3. METHODOLOGY

A qualitative case study methodology was utilized to analyze the potential of Ban Khlong Bang Phai as a venue for community-based tourism (CBT) (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018). A multi-method approach was adopted to ensure triangulation and to gather insights from both community stakeholders and visitors (Patton, 2015). Purposive sampling was

employed to select 20 key informants, which included village leaders, artisans, monks, farmers, small business owners, and tourism officials. Visitor viewpoints were collected through two focus groups with domestic tourists (n = 12), exploratory interviews with five international travelers, and brief visitor surveys carried out during workshops and temple activities (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Data sources comprised semi-structured interviews with

key informants (lasting 60–90 minutes), focus groups and surveys with visitors, participant observation of workshops and temple activities, along with document analysis of local tourism development plans and policy records (Bowen, 2009; Yin, 2018). Field journals and observation notes were kept to promote reflexivity. Data were analyzed thematically, following Braun and Clarke's (2021) six-phase framework. Triangulation across interviews, focus groups, surveys, observations, and documents strengthened the analytical rigor (Patton, 2015). Member-checking with participants further validated credibility and trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Although the number of tourist participants was relatively limited, it allowed for a deeper exploration of visitor perspectives. As a single-case study, the results are specific to the context; however, this thorough analysis improves their applicability to comparable CBT settings. Consequently, the study provides a significant basis for future comparative research in various

communities and tourism contexts.

4. RESULTS

This section outlines findings from interviews conducted with 20 key informants, categorized into two primary groups: (1) government entities, such as the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) and the Tourism and Sports Office, and (2) private entities, comprising village leaders, artisans, monks, farmers, and small business proprietors. The viewpoints of these groups highlight both similarities and differences regarding community-based tourism (CBT) development in Ban Khlong Bang Phai.

4.1. Insights From Government Entities

Government representatives stressed the important role of policy, regulation, and tourism promotion, while also recognizing challenges in applying frameworks effectively.

Table 3: Interview Results from Government Units.

Government Unit	Key Questions	Responses & Insights
TAT Officials	How does TAT view CBT in peri-urban areas?	Officials highlighted that CBT complements Thailand's goal of diversifying tourism beyond urban centers. <i>"CBT in peri-urban zones like Ban Khlong Bang Phai is promising because it links Bangkok visitors with authentic experiences just outside the city,"</i> noted Government Official 1. However, they cautioned that capacity building is essential before large-scale promotion.
	What are the main challenges?	TAT emphasized fragmented coordination. <i>"Policy exists, but communities often lack resources to implement them,"</i> said Government Official 2.
	How does TAT support marketing?	Officials described efforts to include Ban Khlong Bang Phai in regional tourism campaigns but admitted digital strategies remain underdeveloped.
	What is your role in CBT?	Officials stressed their role in providing training workshops on hospitality, English communication, and sanitation. <i>"We focus on readiness. Communities need basic skills before hosting tourists,"</i> explained Government Official 3.
Tourism and Sports Office	What barriers do you observe?	They identified limited budgets and staff turnover as recurring issues.
	How do you perceive collaboration with locals?	Officials acknowledged uneven participation: <i>"Village leaders are active, but sometimes youth and women's groups are left out,"</i> said Government Official 4.

Overall, officials showed hope regarding the prospects of Ban Khlong Bang Phai but repeatedly emphasized the importance of organised training, improved coordination, and more defined marketing approaches.

4.2. Views From Private Entities

Community members pointed out their personal experiences and the real obstacles they face in executing CBT. They underscored the significance of cultural preservation, support for local economies, and direct interaction with tourists, while also expressing concerns about funding issues, generational conflicts, and commercialization.

Table 4: Interview Results from Private Units.

Private Unit	Key Questions	Responses & Insights
Village Leaders	How do you see CBT in the village?	Leaders viewed CBT as a way to strengthen identity and economy. <i>"Tourists are interested in our way of life, and this makes young people proud,"</i> said Village Leader 1. Yet, they worried about unequal benefits: <i>"Some families get more income, others less."</i>
	What support do you need?	Leaders requested infrastructure improvements and marketing support.

Artisans	How does tourism affect handicrafts?	Artisans stressed authenticity. <i>"Tourists like our baskets, but if we make too many for sale, they stop being special,"</i> said Artisan 2. Another added, <i>"Workshops are good because tourists learn and value the skill, not just the product."</i>
Monks	What role do temples play in CBT?	Monks emphasized spiritual and cultural values. <i>"Tourists come for rituals, but we remind them this is about respect, not performance,"</i> said Monk 1. They cautioned against turning ceremonies into staged shows.
Farmers	How does CBT affect agriculture?	Farmers saw CBT as a way to showcase canal-based agriculture. <i>"Visitors are amazed by lotus farming. It makes us proud, but we need help with eco-friendly packaging and promotion,"</i> said Farmer 2. They also highlighted water management issues.
Small Business Owners	How do you benefit from CBT?	Owners of food stalls and homestays appreciated increased income but highlighted competition. <i>"Tourists spend money, but only some of us benefit,"</i> said Small Business Owner 1. They called for transparent systems for distributing opportunities.

The narratives from the private unit express strong enthusiasm for CBT as both a livelihood and a cultural approach while also expressing concerns about inequalities and the potential dilution of culture.

4.3. Thematic Findings

Theme 1: Cultural And Natural Assets

Both groups acknowledged the significance of the cultural and environmental resources found in Ban Khlong Bang Phai. Unique attractions identified included basket weaving using water hyacinths, temple ceremonies, agriculture along the canals, and traditional dishes. Officials from the government highlighted their potential for marketability, while community members focused on the importance of preservation. As one artisan noted: "We want to share our craft, but we do not want to lose its significance. Tourists should appreciate this as heritage, not merely as souvenirs." Monks shared this sentiment: "The temple is a space for living faith, not just a site for tourism." Government representatives recognized these concerns yet emphasized the necessity of finding a balance between authenticity and accessibility.

Theme 2: Community Participation and Empowerment

Community involvement was a key focus for all participants in the discussions. Officials from the government spoke about organized workshops and training sessions, whereas village leaders and artisans emphasized the need for grassroots ownership. Village Leader 2 remarked, "We prefer to make decisions together rather than simply following external instructions." Young people showed excitement for promoting through digital media, while older community members expressed concerns about being sidelined. One elder commented, "If everything transitions to online platforms, the opinions of the elderly might be overlooked." This conflict highlights the generational balance between traditional values and modern

advancements.

Theme 3: Tourist Motivations and Experiences

Weaving, cooking, and farming are some of the interactive and hands-on activities for the tourists. Government speakers highlight to develop more use of infrastructure, whereas the private sector leaders highlight the value of hospitality and real experiences. "Visitors appreciate it when we treat them like family; that's what encourages them to return, not large hotels," states the small company owner. Signage, cleanliness, and transportation are the main issues." Our infrastructure has not kept up with what tourists expect." States by the Government Official 2. Cultural experiences with the needs of modern visitors are emphasised as the differences.

Theme 4: Challenges And Opportunities

Both groups recognised funding limitations, insufficient training, and poor marketing as obstacles. They identified potential in digital platforms, eco-tourism collaborations, and aligning community-based tourism (CBT) with sustainability objectives. Farmer 3 proposed: "By connecting our agriculture with eco-tourism, we could gain support from schools and eco-organisations." Government representatives also highlighted the importance of collaboration. Government Official 4 stated: "We cannot promote CBT in isolation; we require partnerships with local communities and private enterprises." Therefore, opportunities exist in strategic cooperation and capacity development, as long as authenticity remains a priority.

4.4. Synthesis And Implications

The results show both alignment and differences between governmental and private stakeholders. - Government agencies focus on developing frameworks, providing training, and enhancing market presence. For Thailand's tourist diversification plan, they recognise that CBT is a significant element; meanwhile, they have issues with coordination and resource constraints. Identity,

authenticity, and lived experiences are the foremost priorities for private stakeholders. Benefit sharing, cultural preservation, and intergenerational participation are the issues they focus on. Both the private and government sectors recognise the importance of CBT in developing local identity and improving economic progress, but they differ in methodologies. A top-down approach has been used by the Government rapidly, for the communities that demand a bottom-up approach to decision-making.

Implications: Policy: Strategies for CBT should incorporate bottom-up engagement to ensure ownership and fairness. **Practice:** There should be investments in infrastructure, training, and digital skills alongside marketing initiatives. **Theory:** This case underscores the necessity of integrating top-down and bottom-up perspectives within CBT research, reinforcing the call for participatory, context-sensitive models.

Table 5: Comparison Of Government Vs. Private Unit Perspectives on CBT In Ban Khlong Bang Phai.

Theme	Government Unit Perspectives	Private Unit Perspectives
Cultural and Natural Assets	View cultural heritage and canal-based agriculture as tourism products with strong market potential; emphasize packaging and promotion.	Emphasize authenticity and heritage preservation; fear commodification of crafts and rituals; temples seen as sacred, not staged attractions.
Community Participation and Empowerment	Promote structured training and workshops; believe capacity-building comes from government facilitation.	Stress grassroots ownership and collective decision-making; want equitable benefit distribution; youth enthusiastic about digital media, elders cautious.
Tourist Motivations and Experiences	Focus on infrastructure, accessibility, and sanitation to meet tourist expectations.	Highlight hospitality, hands-on experiences, and immersion as key to tourist satisfaction; see gaps between tourist desires and modern conveniences.
Challenges and Opportunities	Identify limited budgets, staff turnover, and lack of marketing as barriers; see digital campaigns and policy frameworks as opportunities.	Identify unequal benefit distribution, cultural dilution, and competition as challenges; see eco-tourism, workshops, and local partnerships as opportunities.
Overall Outlook	Optimistic about CBT as a policy tool for diversifying tourism beyond Bangkok; emphasize structured, top-down support.	Optimistic about CBT as a way to strengthen identity and livelihoods; emphasize authenticity, equity, and bottom-up leadership.

5. DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The results from Ban Khlong Bang Phai highlight the diverse advantages of community-based tourism (CBT) in peri-urban areas, closely resonating with existing global CBT scholarship that focuses on empowering communities, preserving culture, and fostering sustainable livelihoods (Scheyvens, 2002; Giampiccoli & Saayman, 2018). Much like successful CBT examples found in rural Thailand (e.g., Mae Kampong Village), Vietnam (e.g., Sapa ethnic minority homestays), and Indonesia (e.g., Bali's village tourism initiatives), Ban Khlong Bang Phai illustrates that genuine cultural and natural resources—including basket weaving, temple ceremonies, local food, and agriculture along canals—are key factors attracting tourists (Okazaki, 2008; Manyara & Jones, 2021).

Community involvement and empowerment have emerged as essential for achieving fair distribution of benefits, reflecting outcomes from CBT projects in Southeast Asia where local ownership and shared decision-making promote sustainability and strengthen community identity (Ashley & Roe, 2002; Dolezal & Novelli, 2020). Younger people took the initiative to utilize digital tools that support traditional knowledge in Ban Khlong Bang Phai. The situation also highlights

cross-generational collaboration, which develops both cultural authenticity and market reach. According to Tolkach & King (2015), global trends involving enhanced technology may boost knowledge by presenting challenges and integrating innovation with established norms. There are significant policy implications. Although structural assistance is provided by frameworks like Thailand's National Tourism Development Plan (2023–2027), the results reveal deficiencies in infrastructure, finance, and specialized training. Similar trends are observable in Vietnam's peri-urban homestay initiatives, where fair participation and long-term outcomes are not guaranteed by government support alone (Aref, 2011). These initiatives should focus on digital education in marketing, building marketing potential, and implementing equitable government policies that support underrepresented groups, women, and adults by addressing these gaps. Climate and environmental considerations are also important. Ban Khlong Bang Phai highlights that the canal-based history is under threat from pollution, urbanization, and floods, challenges faced by Southeast Asia's peri-urban populations (Tolkach & King, 2015; Cole, 2006). To foster tourism growth, environmentally friendly practices such as craft production, mindful waste management, and

community-driven environmental monitoring should be incorporated. Integrating these approaches with digital systems can improve coordination among stakeholders. Urban strategies differ from rural projects, which was emphasized by the comparative analysis. Rural areas rely heavily on specific cultural tourism. Ban Khlong Bang Phai emphasizes the significance of infrastructure, signage, and visitor sites due to Bangkok and domestic tourist traffic. CBT initiatives in Indonesia and Vietnam emphasize integrating traditional practices and current challenges into digital literacy and community education programs to maintain integrity (Cole, 2007; Giampiccoli & Saayman, 2018). As a result, Ban Khlong Bang Phai states that peri-urban community-based tourism has an association among the authenticity, innovation, and sustainability. For sustainable tourism growth in Southeast Asia an effective development relies on engaging governance, targeted policy assistance, digital promotion, and eco-friendly practices.

6. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

These findings state that Ban Khlong Bang Phai has the greatest potential in a peri-urban CBT site, noting its potential cultural and natural resources, community engagement, and proximity to Bangkok. Conceptually, these results enhance the CBT literature by expanding discussions to peri-urban areas, which are frequently ignored because of rural or remote tourism settings. Based on this research, peri-urban CBT has specific challenges: Being close to metropolitan markets enhances tourist access, but also introduces challenges for commercialisation, infrastructure, and environmental vulnerability. Emphasising the relationship between authenticity, empowerment, and sustainable resource management provides the paradigm for understanding the CBT in changing peri-urban areas.

This research explains that the government ensure women, youth, and elders have an equal role in the decision-making process. Also provides impactful awareness for community stakeholders. Capacity improvement initiatives, such as artisan training, online marketing, and sustainable tourism management, improve community empowerment and market competitiveness. Interactive tourist activities, cultural workshops, and participation in

local traditions emphasise the importance of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage while offering travellers genuine, unforgettable experiences. These results highlight the significance of intergenerational cooperation and enhance the conventional knowledge frameworks, creating a harmony between innovation and cultural preservation through the youth-driven digital approach.

As Thailand's National Tourism Development Plan provides a national framework for CBT, local adaptation is also important. From a policy aspect, these findings highlight the context-aware support systems. Initiatives should develop access to finance, training, and technical assistance by encouraging fair governance and environmental sustainability. For domestic and international businesses, digital methods, such as social media campaigns, digital experiences, and online reservation systems, can create awareness and attract tourists. Similarly, canal preservation and flood prevention should be included in the design of CBT to ensure sustainability and resilience for the ecological management of peri-urban areas.

In conclusion, Ban Khlong Bang Phai states that the capacity of peri-urban CBT promotes economic growth, cultural preservation, and sustainable tourism. Innovation, enabling various community stakeholders, integrating evidence-based policy assistance, and embracing environmentally sustainable practices are the successful advancements of CBT. These finding employs the theoretical approach and practical recommendations for peri-urban CBT initiatives across Southeast Asia, enhancing the broad conversation on sustainable, community-based tourism growth.

In future research findings, the consequences of CBT in Southeast Asia's peri-urban areas, specifically in terms of economic equality, youth involvement and gender dynamics, should be included. An analysis of ASEAN communities could aim for efficient digital marketing strategies, climate-resilient tourism, and sustainable resource management. However, the longitudinal findings on visitor experiences and community fulfilment can improve the insights towards adaptive governance, the efficacy of capacity building, and cultural heritage resilience in rapidly urbanising areas.

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