Chapter - Five

“Conclusion”
Chapter-V

Conclusion

The foregoing study has clearly demonstrated that tourism industry in Thailand is one of the fastest growing service sectors and a great contributor to growth and development. That is why Thailand has motivated tourism industry to generate economic growth which has been helpful in enhancing the overall structure of the country. The government of Thailand has been promoting tourism since 1960 according to the official data and because of this it is known to be an oldest destination for tourism. A number of techniques and market strategies have been used to make tourism industry a success in the country. Government and policy makers have enhanced this sector in present time more because it is growing rapidly and it has become one of the largest job creators as well as foreign exchange earners of the country.

The purpose of this thesis is to identify whether the increasing tourism industry in Thailand with the increased GDP of the country has widened the gap between the poor and the rich, whether it has led to displacement of the local people and whether with increasing affect of the industry, social and national laws has been violated. To some extent the findings were true. But then also tourism is playing a major role in socio-economic, cultural and environmental development in Thailand.

From the above observations, the study has shown that, the economic significance of tourism is very large when measured as a share of GDP and exports. It has become the largest contributor to GDP and source of foreign capital inflow. So, there is no wonder that many developing and industrialized countries see tourism as a tool to accelerate economic growth. The positive effects of tourism in economic sector are well recognized. The development and expansion of tourism infrastructure, accommodation, transportation, communication and other facilities provide direct or indirect employment to the people, which enhance GDP and GNP of the country. So, it can be said that an expansion of tourism leads to more jobs, improvement in income and an inflow of foreign capital, incomes generation and output growth in the country. This industry also contributes to poverty alleviation through providing jobs which generally employ women and unskilled youth. Tax revenue from tourism is been used to improve education, health and infrastructure development further so that the flow of the tourists increase day by day.
and year by year. Growth of tourism industry has become important these days not only for domestic income generation but also for the rural force. Infrastructure, transportation and communication provide a life support to tourism industry. If Thailand wants development of the country on the basis of tourism then it will have increase a large amount of tourism infrastructure and facilities for the tourists.

The economy-wide effects of inbound and outbound tourism expansion on the economy in Thailand include both benefits and costs. These are distributed unevenly across institutions and sectors. An inbound tourism expansion in Thailand can stimulate higher real GDP but with a deterioration in the trade balance due to an appreciation in the real exchange rate. An inbound tourism expansion causes a substantial increase in imports of intermediate inputs in manufacturing. Although the trade balance deteriorates, the current account deficit can decline owing to the extra foreign receipts from net inbound tourism and transfers that have to be large enough to pay off a reduction in the trade surplus. It has also been discussed earlier in terms of economy that income generated from tourism sector should be utilized in such a manner that the local people also be benefitted and the benefits should be distributed as widely as possible and not concentrated within few sections of the country. To some extent all these views were accepted but the distribution of the benefits which came from tourism industry were not proportionately distributed in which the rich became richer and the poor became poorer. For an example: an inbound tourism expansion benefits all household classes in terms of an increase in consumption, utility and income. An increase in income induces all household classes to consume more of a variety of goods and services. However, within the same income level, households in non-agriculture gain more than households in agriculture. These results point out that an inbound tourism expansion is not a pro-poor or pro-agricultural household policy as long as the owners of primary factors in agriculture, especially low income agricultural households, do not participate in tourism-related activities.

All the benefits like good roads, infrastructure, good hotels, sanitation and security were enjoyed by the urban people and basically those who maintained class in the country. That is why it can be said the gap between the rich and the poor in Thailand has grown because of the tourism industry. This is not the only negative aspect of tourism.
in terms of economy but the tourism industry also leads to price hype of goods and services, cost of living, increase in the price of house and land, increase in the cost of infrastructure etc. One of the worse negative impact occur the loss of employment due to the seasonal tourism which create the risk of unemployment after certain period. Therefore, tourism development needs legislation, appropriate technology and proper management, so that the effect of the industry can be seen only in positive way.

The study has also demonstrated that the socio-cultural significance of tourism, measured in terms of employment is very large. It also illustrated that appropriate tourism-related interventions can play a role in raising the standard of living and reducing poverty in local communities. Positive change in the quality of life could be as follows: personal income increases, helps to improve living standards for those more directly involved in industry, supports the diversity of restaurants and other cultural entertainment. It is believed that increasing tourism in Thailand has caused acculturation which means that the tourists accept and internalize the values and culture of the host country and give some of its own. Like this diffusion of culture can also be seen. There is a give and take relationship in tourism. In this situation local people of the host country adopt life styles, clothing, food habits, languages and several other things from inbound and outbound tourists. It also enhances arts, crafts, customs, ceremony, music, dance etc. in Thailand. Tourism industry has only influenced most of the local artists to grow in the country especially ethnic and rural tourism. Tourism has broadened the views of the people of both the sides like the tourists and the host. Due to this both of them have explored each others beliefs, values, tradition, customs and way of life and to some extent they have even exchanged their traditions. This shows the strength of unity and diversity in the country.

Besides these, people to people interaction as a new tourism paradigm, fostering international understanding and friendship through the direct exchange of ideas and experiences among people of diverse cultures. Travel has become one of the great forces for peace and understanding as people move throughout the world and learn to know each other, to understand each other’s customs, and to appreciate the qualities of the individuals of each nation, tourism builds a level of international understanding which can sharply improve the attitude for world peace. It also puts us in touch with other ways.
of living, other religions and other perceptions of the world and its history. This helps people to discover themselves and others, both as individuals and as communities. Tourism is the people’s building block for global peace and cultural understanding. It can also help to drive economic growth and alleviate poverty.

But impact of tourism will always be positive it is not necessary. Much of the literature says that impact of tourism on socio-cultural aspects of Thailand tends to emphasize negative perspectives. Tourism development in the country has also contributed to an increase in crimes and other social problems as well as socio-economic inequalities. Not only moral problems but also so many social and cultural issues arise from the impact of tourism in Thailand. For Example, the situation has become more strained with the setting of sex tourism in most parts of the country, especially in the “sex capital” of the world, encouraging foreign tourists to come especially for this reason. The rapid growth of casinos, bars and prostitution, use of drugs in several tourist destinations are the declining signs of morality. Because all these tourists sites in the country are famous for accommodations and facilities for foreign tourists with wine, casinos and sex.

Accept all these social evils there are other factors which has negative impact on the local community of the country. To make tourism a world class destination each and every country improves their social and cultural life but these improvement become curses for the poor people of the host country. Government improves the infrastructure, sanitation, civil aviation, hotels, water facilities, sewage system but with all these advancement local people staying here and there in the country gets affected. Government displaces them from their land to improve the infrastructure of the country. So, displacement is also one of the major problems which occur from tourism industry. Therefore, tourism promotion needs pertinent care so that tourism activities and infrastructures are planned on sound efficacies.

When there is a discussion on tourism the concept of environment cannot be neglected. From the above assessment the impact of tourism on environment is the most important factor for the tourist development in Thailand. The environment is a factor that is increasingly influencing tourist demand. As the demand for tourist products is partly determined by the quality of the related environment, it can have either a positive or a negative influence on tourism. In the same way, tourism may have a positive or a
negative impact on the environment. A positive impact on the environment is for example better economical possibilities to maintain or restore cultural buildings and to protect the nature. Nature-based tourism is an important tool for generating employment and income. Natural beauty and resources and scenic environments are one of the major attractions to Thailand. But the rapid growth of tourism, swift economic expansion and the lack of long-term planning contribute to the country’s environmental problems like a high level of carbon monoxide, high deforestation, waste products, water pollution and destruction of coral reefs and development of golf courses that have caused environmental deterioration.

Environmental concerns have led the Thai government and TAT to shift the focus from mass tourism to rural tourism and ecotourism. This trend emphasizes the preservation and protection of environments and natural resources for tourists and for Thai citizens. It avoids exploiting natural resources and environments and increases the benefits to local communities and host countries. (TAT, 2006) But in spite of all laws and policies provided for environment the negative impacts are still visible. Negative impact on the environment is for example air emissions from passenger transport, violation of national laws, social values, violation of ethics of environment etc. therefore, to control these violation in Thailand, strict rules and regulations should be made by the government and concerned organisation. So, that the quality of tourism improves rather than quantity.

The impacts of tourism are extremely ambivalent. On the one hand, tourism plays an important and certainly also positive role in the socio-economic and political development of many countries. It can contribute to socio-economic development and cultural exchange and can further promote international relations and peace by creating awareness that respects the diversity of cultures and ways of life. On the other hand, many hopes that were placed on tourism as an engine of economic development have been disappointed. At the same time, in many tourism destinations partially massive negative impacts upon the environment, culture and society are becoming apparent that are calling into question whether tourism is a viable development pathway. Tourism has brought several socio-economic benefits in Thailand. But at the other side, it is often being attacked as a cause of socio-economic and cultural decline in the country. So, it is
necessary to think about the future of tourism in Thailand, which lies on two important concepts:

- Control the negative aspects of tourism which is making tourism down and
- Promotion of tourism market in large scale.

Thailand needs to establish strategies to upgrade and protect its natural resources and scenic environments for the long-term benefit of its citizens and tourists. Thailand has emphasized the importance of a “sufficiency economy”, which was suggested by the country’s King to balance the development of human, social, economic and environmental resources. Thailand has also made remarkable progress in meeting most if not all Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

For example, country has already reached the international MDG poverty target of halving the proportion of people living in poverty between 1990 and 2015. Thailand has also set ambitious MDG Plus targets for education, health, gender equality and environment. (MDG Report, 2004)

In spite of these impressive achievements, major challenges remain. Persistent disparities among regions and groups within the country, including marginalized and vulnerable groups, need to be addressed. Policies and resources are needed to tackle poverty and below-average health conditions in the Northeast of Thailand, the remote highland areas of the North of Thailand, and the three predominantly Muslim southernmost provinces, areas that are lagging behind the rest of the country. During the past decade, Thailand has been successful in extending the coverage of social services. Now the challenge is to upgrade quality. The education system needs further reform, health services need improvement, especially in the areas of preventive care and health promotion, and the capacity of local government to do their job needs strengthening in the context of Thailand’s decentralization efforts. Finally, the Report is about Thailand reaching out to other countries and contributing to the global partnership for human development called for in MDG 8. As a successful medium human development country, Thailand is becoming an important development partner engaging in technical cooperation and sharing its experience with neighbours and beyond, as well as opening up its expanding markets for other developing countries. Thailand is firmly committed to
meet its obligations to the international community (MDG 8) as well as to its own citizens. (MDG Report, 2004)

Most of the MDG became helpful for tourism industry because the goals helped in enhancing the industry more than ever before. The greatest challenge lies in improving quality. Information and communication technology (ICT) is expected to bridge the urban-rural gap and help prepare Thai people and the community to participate in knowledge based society. Finally, expanding learning opportunities and life skills development add to the quality agenda. Several decades of extensive rural development programmes undertaken by various government and non-government agencies in Thailand have resulted in overall achievement in reducing poverty, improving nutrition, and basic human needs of the entire population. There are several on-going government programmes, for example, debt reduction schemes, the Village Fund, micro credit schemes, low-cost housing and the universal health care scheme, contributing further to this success. The strategies and programme set for the betterment of the country has also improved the quality of tourism industry. It has also increased the tourist arrival and the revenue of the country.

In 2004, Thailand’s international tourist arrival increased 16% and revenue increased 24%. Thai tourist arrivals decreased by 1%, as a result of the tsunami of 2004. But Thailand soon regained its lost tourism growth status in 2006. Thailand ranked 13th in international tourism receipts (US$12.4 billion) and 18th in international tourist arrivals, with 12.9 million visitors. (WTO, 2007)

But it does not mean the expansion of programme and policies are not needed in future. Tourism industry is an ever growing industry and to enhance tourism development in the country national development strategies, policies, regulations, plans and the allocation of resources are needed. There is also a need of improve national statistics and indicators, including indicators of the socio-economic, cultural and environmental impact.

Thailand is also launching a new initiative called “Friends from Thailand”, a volunteer programme that dispatches Thai development experts and personnel to other countries in the region to share knowledge and expertise (MDG Report, 2004). This will help in propagating tourism sector in other countries.
The above study reveals that for the further development of tourism industry in Thailand, the government should focus toward joint marketing efforts and bring in more tourists and revenue to each of the countries involved. There should be proper training and education related to tourism so that qualified workforce can assist both the private and the public sector in the tourism industry. To establish this necessary training and education, strong support and guidance are needed from the Thai government. Without qualified employees, tourists will not receive quality service. Tourism sector in Thailand should go with the future trends and facilities which will help tourists to get reliable and consistent information from the host country. Therefore, Thailand needs to maintain and update regularly its website. So, that it can become the number one information source for potential visitors in planning their vacations. As it has discussed earlier that there is a need to shift from quantity to quality based tourism to protect the environment, so, for this long-term strategic planning should be developed to ensure the proper implementation of these standards. And government should also establish specific guidelines to preserve the country’s natural and cultural resources. With all these efforts, government should also make some strategy to attract tourists more from the other countries like: ASEAN, Malaysia, Singapore, Laos, China, India Vietnam and other southeast Asian countries, because it helps in enhancing more and more foreign exchange revenues from tourism.

According to the TAT, International visitors’ arrivals to Thailand by Nationality in 2009 totaled 14.09 million of whom 3.92 million visitors were from ASEAN countries. This was a small decline of only 1.2 percent, a much better performance than expected. Malaysia topped the list with list with 1.73 million arrivals, followed by Laos 639,692 and Singapore 563,191. The outlook for the first quarter of 2010 is also expected to be good, especially during the Chinese New Year holidays. Airlines are reporting almost 100 percent bookings during the festival for flights from Kuala Lumpur to Bangkok, Chiang Mai and Phuket. (TAT, 2010)

To improve more in context of International Tourism in Thailand, there is a need to repositioning itself and to formulate the new strategy for sustainable growth in the future.
To make Thailand a World class destination it is necessary to keep:

- Beautiful and undeteriorated destination
- Maintaining its unique custom and culture to worldwide
- Unpolluted environment
- Keep it free from crime, accident and safe sanitary
- Having an adequate amount of infrastructures and facilities
- Having a good-quality system in transportation
- Worldwide telecommunication system is also needed to contact with major tourism cities.

Tourism serves as a means for Thailand today, tomorrow and will be serving for coming years to receive foreign exchange currency, increase international reserves and stimulate production, which will in turn enhance the country's economic status. Thailand has made some progress in protecting biodiversity and reducing carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions as well as ozone depleting substances. More needs to be done on a range of environmental concerns. Balancing the needs of economic growth and environmental sustainability will be Thailand's greatest challenge. The uncontrolled growth of this industry can result in serious environmental and social problems. So, national tourism master plans need to be prepared, with specific objectives to be integrated within a country's overall economic and social development objectives. This will make Thailand one of the major international tourist destinations in Southeast Asia and the world in future.