

SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES IN COASTAL AREAS TO TRANSFORM, EXPAND THEIR LIVELIHOODS TO INVOLVE IN TOURISM

*Nguyen Thi Lan Huong**, *Le Quynh Chi†*, *Tran Thi My Linh‡*

Date received the article: 05/02/2021

Date received the review results: 04/8/2021

Date published the article: 27/8/2021

Abstract: *Developing coastal craft villages in a balanced manner between commercial activities and other livelihoods, contributing to conserving and preserving traditional values of traditional craft villages in coastal areas is one of the important goals of sustainable marine economy development in Vietnam. The research „Supporting communities in coastal areas to transform, expand their livelihoods and develop tourism“ with the scope of coastal handicraft villages which are at risk of being disappeared was carried out in order to assess and recommend the solutions to improve living conditions for traditional coastal craft villagers. The livelihood expansion and transformation will increase income, improve quality of life, limit dependence on nature, reduce risks, increase livelihood assets and increase accessibility and stable sources of livelihood assets. The sustainable development of craft villages will contribute to ensuring employment and social security issues while creating greater benefits for the preservation, maintenance and promotion of cultural values in the coastal areas. Besides, the development of diverse, unique, highly competitive tourism will be motivated as well as taking the advantaged of the region’s strengths.*

Keywords: *livelihoods; Tourism development, coastal areas, craft village, livelihood transformation.*

I. Introduction

Craft villages in one of the treasure in the coastal area of Vietnam. A long history exist with its own characteristics of people, occupations and products, this place has become a hidden charm of the rich cultural values of the people of the sea. How to developing craft villages in a balanced way between

commercial activities and other livelihoods, contributing to preserving and conserving the traditional values of traditional craft villages in coastal areas is one of the important goals of sustainable marine economic development. Therefor, studying and supporting communities in coastal areas to transform, expand their livelihoods and develop tourism with

* Institute for Tourism Development Research

† Faculty of Tourism – Hanoi Open University

‡ Academy of Policy and Development

the scope of coastal craft villages was carried out to ensure that it could be the best practice in livelihood change for local communities which contributed positively to improving living standards, broadening sustainable livelihoods for traditional coastal villages at risk of being threatened; encouraged the restoration, preservation and promotion of cultural values in traditional craft villages along the coast of Vietnam; met practical needs and could help coastal communities, especially coastal craft villages, maintain their lives and ensure long-term and sustainable livelihoods during the development.

II. Theoretical basis

2.1. Livelihood

Livelihood is a concept which is often understood and used in many ways and at different levels. In this study, the term “livelihood” means the ways of earning a living of a community, in particular, “livelihood” is understood as the mode of living of the people living in the coastal areas of Vietnam including activities of making a living according to traditional methods (cultivation, livestock, fishing, aquaculture and seafood processing, etc.), and new ways of making a living through the process of contact with neighboring ethnic groups, through the state’s support policy and vocational training as well as from the internal development in economic activities of the coastal villages of Vietnam.[1]

Sustainable Livelihoods: “A livelihood is sustainable when it has the ability to respond to and recover from impacts, or can promote capabilities and

assets both now and in the future. while not eroding the foundation of natural resources.[2]

2.2. Livelihood transforming

Livelihood transformation is accomplished through livelihood strategies. In the most general sense, livelihood strategy is the way people access and use livelihood assets in specific economic, political, social and environmental contexts to achieve livelihood outcomes expected [3].

Livelihood strategies can be short-term, medium-term or long-term. Livelihood strategies can also be spontaneous, reactive or planned. The implementation of these strategies depends very much on the actual context, as well as the conditions of livelihood assets of local households. The response strategy is to ensure access to livelihoods, secure income, limit the decline of livelihood assets and immediate negative impacts in order to maintain stability for livelihoods of the people in emergency requirements. The spontaneous response strategy takes place independently, apart from the individual plan, lacks system and is located on a small scale. The planned response strategy is to use specific, pre-prepared actions to address changes from external influences. The planned response strategy has the task of ensuring the diversity and stability of livelihood assets, as well as the access to livelihood assets of households, orienting how to access and use these livelihood resources in specific contexts in order to stabilize and develop a sustainable life in the long term.

2.3. Livelihood characteristics of people in coastal craft villages

Traditional coastal village can be considered as a coastal village that has one or some traditional crafts handed down for a long time, which can be separated from agricultural activities. The development of coastal craft villages currently faces many difficulties and limitations such as: scattered on a small scale, closed within households; the skill level is lost due to the ineffectiveness of technology transfer and vocational training; handicraft products of craft villages in a state of weak competitiveness or being replaced by industrial products of the same type, making it difficult to consume and develop production... Besides, the livelihoods of coastal people are mainly rely on fishing and people often live in isolated and disadvantaged areas. Coastal people often face a vulnerable and dangerous environment.[4]

Livelihood transformation creates incentives for people to stop unsustainable livelihood activities and switch to sustainable livelihood activities. The main objective of livelihood transformation is to increase income, improve quality of life, less dependence on nature, reduce risks, increase livelihood assets and increase the stable livelihood assets.[5]

III. Methodology

- Methods of synthesis and analysis: Methods of synthesis and analysis are used to systematize necessary information and general theoretical issues on livelihoods that are selected in accordance with development conditions of Vietnam on the basis of inheriting and expanding

research from various sources including specialized books, journals, research and scientific documents of domestic and international authors.

- Field trip and survey: The research team conducted field surveys in Thanh Hoa, Nghe An, Binh Dinh, Phu Yen and Ba Ria - Vung Tau to assess the conditions and current development as well as existing livelihoods of craft villages within the province and neighboring areas and collect information and build the data base.

- Sociological survey method: Conducting a survey of 500 questionnaires (120 international visitor, 160 domestic visitor, 170 community and 50 travel agency staff members who organize tours to the coastal craft villages) in coastal provinces and cities to determine the needs and expectations for the transformation and expansion of livelihoods associated with tourism development, thereby serving as a basis for developing proposals to support suitable aid.

- Expert method: Consult with 50 tourism and traditional handicraft experts and officials from management agencies and tourism businesses on proposals to support residential communities to transform and expand livelihoods (interviews, seminars).

- Statistical method: From the collected and synthesized data, the descriptive statistical method is used to describe, analyze data, documents, assess trends of regular issues.

- Comparative method: This method is used to compare and evaluate indicators over time and space.

IV. Results and Discussion

Overview of the current status of livelihoods associated with tourism development in traditional coastal craft villages in Vietnam

According to statistics of the Vietnam Association of Craft Villages (VICRAFTS), there are 5,411 craft villages and craft villages in the whole country, of which nearly 2,000 recognized craft villages, over 400 traditional craft villages with more than 53 craft groups. Among craft villages, in the coastal area, there

are over 150 craft villages representing traditional occupations, many of which have tourism value [6]. In general, the traditional occupations in the coastal areas are quite diverse, both bearing the common characteristics of traditional occupations in general (hereditary, family occupations...) however, due to the geographical location, along the coast, the traditional occupations of this area will also form their own specific features and uniqueness suitable for natural conditions, serving the livelihoods of coastal fishermen.

Figure 1: Tourism activities that businesses can organize in coastal traditional craft villages



Source: Database of the research team

Many traditional craft products are produced for tourism not only as souvenirs but also a cultural inspired value, which will be the basis to attract tourists to visit to learn more about the culture of coastal craft village. The product line of the local cultural experience is also got great interest of tourists, as a result, craft village tourism is an attractive choice for many tourism businesses and destinations. Tourism activities associated with craft villages in Vietnam's coastal areas currently mainly include:

- Visiting traditional craft villages;
- Participating in traditional festivals of the craft village (on festive occasions);

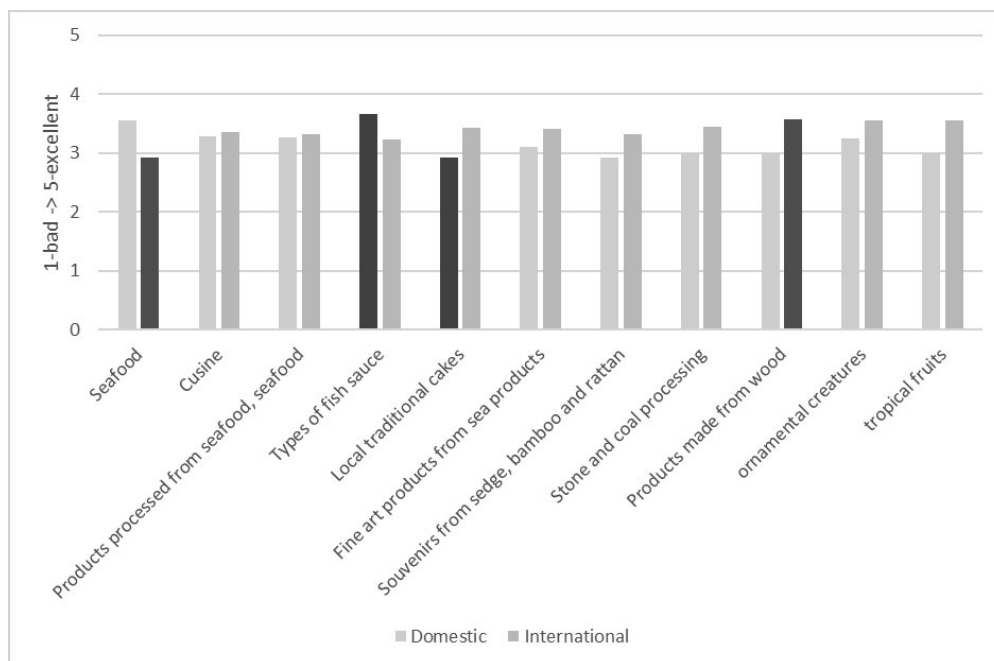
- Learn the production process (production of salt, fish sauce, textiles, confectionery, goods, handicrafts...);
- Directly making traditional products;
- Enjoy traditional performance;
- Enjoy the food and drinks in the villages (tasting, snacks, meals...);
- Shopping in craft villages. (Figure 1)

According to the survey of the travel businesses that organize tourism products in coastal villages, a package tour at a craft village usually lasts 1-2 hours, or it can be up to half a day if tourist go and

experience by themselves. In some craft village, tourism activities often focus mainly on life experiences (90.7% of respondent), introduction of local people and culture (67.4% of respondent), communication with local people (65% of respondent), introducing traditional crafts and shopping (65.1%), sightseeing (62.8%). Sports activities are still quite modest at 37.2 % The main causes can be mentioned as lack of equipment, lack of facilities lack of service skills and no guarantee of safety for participants.

Tourism activities mainly in coastal craft villages are currently limited to activities such as sightseeing, culinary and traditional crafts experience, etc., which have not really created many initiatives that attract tourists even make tourists feel uncomfortable but spending is till high. Specialty products and traditional goods sold to customers in craft villages are still monotonous with unattractive packaging, lack of the village's identity and brand. Many souvenir goods are not targeted tourists, therefore, bulky and fragile, making it difficult to buy and bring back via air transport (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Evaluation of the tourist for coastal craft village products



Source: Database of the research team

The products from traditional occupations have been impressed tourists' impressions deeply, mainly enjoying available seafood cuisine. Tourism activities associated with craft villages are currently only developed to a limited extent because many craft villages no longer retain their traditional production methods or production is limited in a few households, so there are no longer many special activities for tourists to

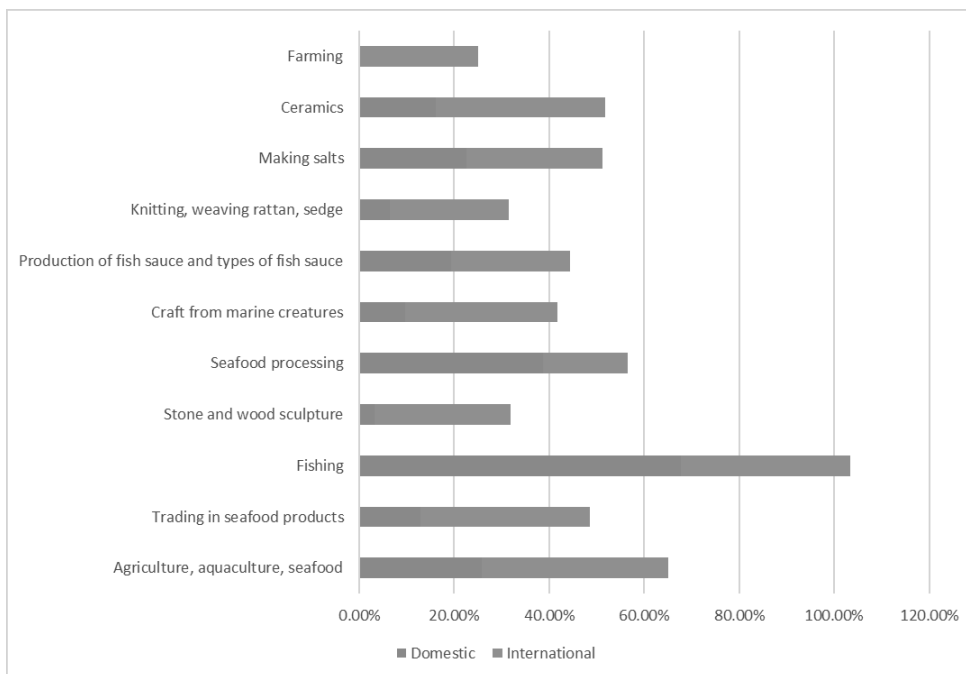
visit and to learn. In addition, the most serious problem of coastal villages is the environmental problem. Natural disasters, effect of climate change are taking place on a large scale with increasing severity, so choosing a destination for tourists is not simple (Figure 3).

Financial, professional qualifications and education constraints have a significant impact in the areas. Farmers'

economy is reduced, dependent, with low capital accumulation, it is difficult to find opportunities in improving traditional livelihoods and participating in economic activities in the region. Furthermore, the interpretation of traditional values, indigenous culture, historical stories, traditional occupations etc... in tourist

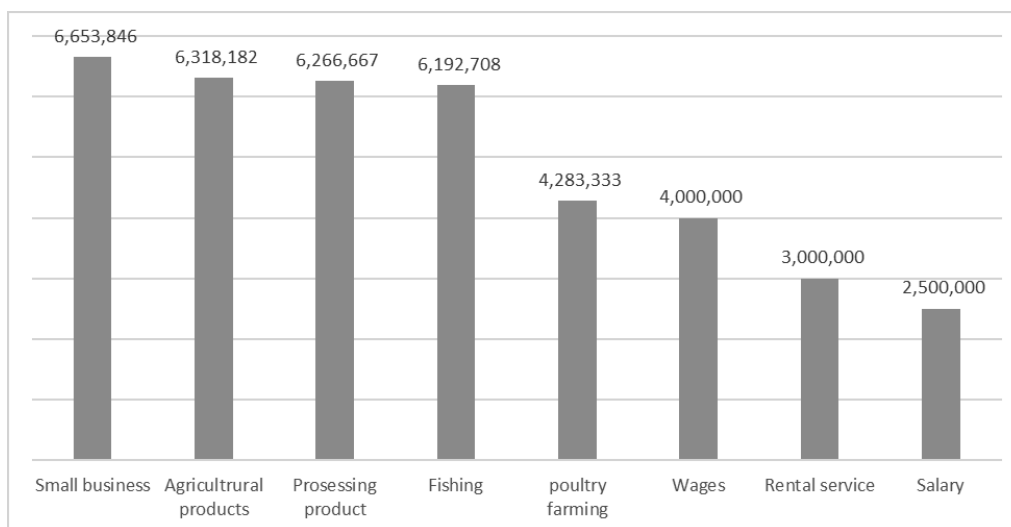
destinations in coastal craft villages is still very limited and currently only depends on explanations of the tourguide, or some explanation of the community when visitors come to visit. Consequently, it leads to the ineffectiveness in the communication and reducing the value of the above values in tourism activity.

Figure 3: Coastal craft village impression



Source: Database of the research team

Figure 4: Average income of the coastal village



Source: Database of the research team

The disadvantages of tourism development in coastal village can be figured out as: There are not many theme tours to craft villages and the support of local authorities in developing these kinds of activity is not really effective. The visitors, tourists, especially backpackers, come to visit, take pictures, learn about the village by themselves as well as share on social networks with the help of the tour company. Tourism promotion activities in coastal localities almost exclusively focus on resorts and sea tourism, but have not mentioned much about this unique and potential cultural tourism uniqueness.

In fact, marine tourism products of coastal provinces are also diversified to attract tourists in almost every market segment, from resort tourists to adventurous tourists, from teenagers to elderly tourists, from self-sufficient tourists to groups, from leisure tourists to business tourists.

Some orientations in expanding and transforming traditional coastal village livelihoods

Based on the research and assessment of the current situation, the target group that needs to prioritize livelihood development within the area of traditional craft villages include: Women (head of household); Low-income group (traditional fishermen); Group of private, small and micro household's businesses in the region.

Accordingly, the industry groups that need to be prioritized for expansion and development include: Producing local products in combination with providing tourism services; Transporting visitors

by boat; Homestay services, housing rental and local cuisine processing; art Performance, cultural activities, and especially introducing cultural, traditional crafts activities of the craft village.

Policy for livelihood development

Coastal tourism development policy in Vietnam includes long-term policy and short-term urgent policy which are reflected in Marine development strategies, planning, programs and projects. The policies must ensure encouragement, concentrated mobilization of resources, and maximized potentials and strengths for development; Preserve and promote traditional values, improve quality, efficiency and competitiveness; Create driving force for socio-economic development.

Developing fast and sustainable sea, islands and coastal tourism plays a significant role in the economy. It must prioritize high-quality marine tourism; associate with the goal of ensuring national security; and place in the overall socio-economic development relationship of the coastal area and in accordance with Strategy for sustainable development of Vietnam's marine economy to 2030, vision to 2045 (Resolution No. 36-NQ/TW)

Capacity building of the community

Capacity building of the community basically meet the criteria for sustainable development of the marine economy; forming marine ecological culture system; proactively adapt to climate change and sea level rise; prevent the trend of pollution, degradation of the marine environment, coastal erosion and sea erosion; restore and

conserve important marine ecosystems; application of new, advanced and modern scientific achievements and technology to become a direct factor in promoting sustainable development of the marine economy.

The participation of economic sectors in coastal communities

Identifying the significance of the participation of all economic sectors will help to foster the tourism in coastal area in the manner of balance between benefit and responsibility sharing. Sea tourism economic development strategy should focus on tourism infrastructure investment; encourage and create favorable conditions for all economic sectors, especially small and medium-sized business households, to participate in the development of eco-tourism, scientific exploration, community-based tourism, experiencing and creative tourism.

Tourism product development associated with livelihood expansion and transformation

Building, developing and diversifying products and product chains on the basis of biodiversity conservation, promoting the unique values of natural, cultural and historical heritages of areas and regions. In order to change local people occupations from activities with risks of invasion and negatively impacting on the sea to protection, conservation and creation of sustainable livelihoods, stable new jobs, improving high income, it really need the involvement of the whole political including central and local who support and enable the environment sufficiently for coastal people to approach

the sustainability in their work.

Orientation to develop coastal craft villages in the direction of combining tourism development:

- As a place to experience and exchange culture with the local;
- As a place to preserve and simulate traditional crafts;
- A place to visit combined with shopping.

Orientation of craft villages participating intourismactivitiesaccording to specific traditional occupations:

- Seafood processing village: Experience local lifestyle combining cuisine and introducing local specialties;

- Handicraft village: experience traditional crafts, introduce handicraft products and processes, participate in production, introduce and display products;

- Local specialty processing village: experience in combination with introducing local specialties, introducing and displaying products;

- Traditional fishing village: introducing fishery and indigenous experiences;

- Village producing and processing products from the sea (salt, fish sauce...): Experience, introduce the production process and display products; health care creative products;

- Village of flowers and ornamental plants: experience the space of a craft village in combination with shopping ornamental marine products.

V. Conclusion

The development of tourism associated with coastal communities has many opportunities and challenges, in which the community's main concern is seafood resources and human resources that need to be managed for sustainable development. Coastal areas, especially traditional craft villages, also need clearer strategies to appeal tourists and contribute more to the local economy. Many new factors arise in the development stage of goods, technology, consumer needs... have been affecting the coastal area of Vietnam, requiring each village and each region to study for the embracing specific products based on their strengths, solve difficult problems of raw materials, increase production scale, design and quality of products to meet the needs of tourists as well as overcoming the difficulties in finding new livelihoods to adapt to the new era.

References:

- [1]. Lương Thị Thu Hằng, Đề tài KH&CN cấp quốc gia: Đánh giá tác động của biến đổi khí hậu đến nhóm người nghèo ở Bắc bộ Việt Nam và đề xuất các giải pháp giảm thiểu biến đổi khí hậu, *Viện Nghiên cứu phát triển bền vững Vùng*, (2015).
- [2]. Đỗ Thị Hiệp, Nguyễn Văn Song, Chiến lược sinh kế ứng phó biến đổi khí hậu, Viện Nghiên cứu Phát triển Du lịch, *Báo cáo tổng hợp nhiệm vụ "Hỗ trợ cộng đồng dân cư khu vực ven biển chuyển đổi sinh kế, phát triển du lịch"*, (2019)
- [3]. Trần Thọ Đạt và Nguyễn Hoài Thu, Biến đổi khí hậu và sinh kế ven biển. *Diễn đàn phát triển Việt Nam*. NXB Giao thông vận tải, Hà Nội, (2012).

[4]. Lê Anh, "Phát triển làng nghề trong bối cảnh hội nhập", Báo điện tử Đảng Cộng sản Việt Nam, đăng trên website: <http://www.dangcongsan.vn/kinh-te-va-hoi-nhap/phet-trien-lang-nghe-truyen-thong-trong-boi-can-hoi-nhap-475767.html>

[5]. Viện Chính sách và Chiến lược phát triển Nông nghiệp nông thôn, *Báo cáo tóm tắt "Các nhân tố hỗ trợ và cản trở hộ nghèo tiếp cận các nguồn vốn sinh kế để giảm nghèo bền vững"*, (2018)

[6]. Vũ Quốc Tuấn, Một số giải pháp nhằm phát triển du lịch làng nghề ở Việt Nam, *Tạp chí Tổng quan Kinh tế - Xã hội Việt Nam*. (02/2019).

[7]. Viện Nghiên cứu Phát triển Du lịch, *Báo cáo tổng hợp nhiệm vụ "Hỗ trợ cộng đồng dân cư khu vực ven biển chuyển đổi sinh kế, phát triển du lịch"*, (2019).

[8]. Nghị quyết số 36-NQ/TW.

[9]. Chiến lược phát triển du lịch Việt Nam đến năm 2020, tầm nhìn đến năm 2030.

Author's address: Faculty of Tourism – Hanoi Open University

Email: chilq@hou.ed