

Leveraging Cultural Resources in the Socioeconomic Development of the San Diu Ethnic in Thai Nguyen

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ABSTRACT: Along with natural, social, financial resources..., culture with unique and creative values is an important endogenous resource that determines the sustainable development of groups of ethnic, ethnic groups and nations. Currently, culture of ethnic minorities is a resource to develop community-based tourism (CBT) - a trend that attracts tourists, especially in the northern mountainous area. The article examines cultural capital of the San Diu ethnic in Dong Hy, Thai Nguyen to propose orientations to CBT to increase income, poverty reduction. The research methods used include document analysis, secondary data analysis, fieldwork with in-depth interviews and group discussions, and interdisciplinary analysis. The research results show that the cultural of the San Diu ethnic are very unique and attractive. Cultural capital, if exploited for tourism, will really become a new livelihood, having an important meaning in socio - economic development with promoting cultural of the San Diu ethnic in Dong Hy, Thai Nguyen towards sustainability.

Keywords: San Diu, cultural capital, development, livelihood, community tourism...

I. INTRODUCTION

At the VIII National Congress (1996), Documents of the Communist Party of Vietnam determined: Culture is the spiritual foundation of society, both a goal and a driving force for socio-economic development. Economic growth is associated with improving ethnic's living standards, developing culture and education, and realizing social progress and justice [1].

The XIII Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam decides direction, goals and tasks of the Vietnamese revolution in 5 years (2021-2025); determining the direction and goals of the country to 2030 and a vision to 2045. The Communist Party of Vietnam determined: "With cultural values, Vietnamese ethnic as the foundation, important endogenous strength to ensure sustainable development" [2]. The Congress also stated: "Associating cultural development with tourism development, turning tourism into a spearhead economic sector, at the same time protecting and preserving cultural resources for future generations" [2].

After Resolution No. 24 (Term IX) on Ethnic Affairs, in addition implementing guidelines and policies of the Party and State, conservation and promotion of cultural of ethnic minorities has been associated with economic development, poverty reduction. Many eco-tourism areas and community-based tourism models have brought higher and higher income and created jobs for the ethnic. Especially, economic models that have helped to preserve, restore and promote traditional cultural values [3].

With the strengths of natural assets and diverse cultures, tourism is an important industry in Vietnam's economic growth, job creation, and overall prosperity. Decision No. 147/QĐ-TTg dated January 22, 2020, of the Prime Minister approving "Vietnam's tourism development strategy until 2030" affirms that tourism will become a key economic sector by 2030. In addition, the development of tourism in Vietnam needs to focus on cultural tourism, linking tourism development with the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage and ethnic identity [4].

Community-based tourism is a new livelihood direction that provides a source of income for local communities, solves local employment issues, contributes to poverty reduction and enhances the quality of life. At the same time, with the trend of exploiting cultural values to serve tourism, local residents are raising awareness and proactively preserving the cultural identity of ethnic minorities. This is a sustainable direction in the goal of conserving and promoting cultural values alongside economic and social development [5], [6]. Practice shows that, along with the implementation of the Party's resolutions, the culture of ethnic minorities has been exploited to develop community-based tourism. Many models of community tourism such as Lac village

(Mai Chau, Hoa Binh), Sin Suoi Ho (Lai Chau), community tourism villages in Ha Giang ... have confirmed this is an effective and sustainable direction. is a new livelihood direction that both develops the economy and preserves traditional culture [7], [8], [9], [10], [11], [12], [13]. Thai Nguyen has also paid attention to exploiting culture in sustainable development of ethnic minorities from community tourism [9].

Based on these perspectives and practical research, the article analyzes the potential of cultural capital in the direction of sustainable livelihood development of the San Diu ethnic in Dong Hy, Thai Nguyen in association with CBT.

II. METHODS

The article is made based on 2 main methods:

Document analysis method, secondary data, inheriting previous researches on San Diu ethnic, San Diu culture, CBT, preserving and promoting ethnic culture.

In addition, the fieldwork method was carried out with the method of in-depth interviews and group discussions with the local community, to contribute to clearly seeing the cultural values and orientation to exploit the cultural values of the San Diu ethnic in the area current livelihood development.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Introduce about the San Diu ethnic in Thai Nguyen

In Vietnam, the San Diu is mainly concentrated in the North, with about 40,000 ethnic, residing along the low mountain slopes in Quang Ninh, Hung Yen, Bac Giang, Bac Ninh, Phu Tho, Vinh Phuc, Bac Kan, Thai Nguyen, Ha Giang, Tuyen Quang and a part in Thanh Hoa [15].

According to the 2019 Population and Housing Census, the San Diu ethnic in Vietnam have a population of 183,004 ethnic, present in 56 out of 63 provinces and cities in the country.

TABLE 1. POPULATION OF SAN DIU ETHNIC IN VIETNAM

Number	Province	Population (ethnic)	Compared to the total number of San Diu ethnic in Vietnam (%)
1	Thai Nguyen	56477	30,9%
2	Vinh Phuc	46222	25,2%
3	Bac Giang	33846	18,5%
4	Quang Ninh	22669	12,4%
5	Tuyen Quang	15440	8,4%

(Source: Population and Housing Census of the General Statistics Office in 2019)

Through the above data table, it can be seen that the San Diu ethnic group resides the most in Thai Nguyen province, accounting for 30.9% of the total number of San Diu ethnic in the country. The San Diu ethnic in Thai Nguyen are present in most of the districts but are mainly distributed in the semi-mountain area, the largest concentration is in Dong Hy district. During the residence process, the San Diu ethnic have created cultural imbued with the midland region, creating the distinction of a community residing in a typical hilly ecological area.

3.2. Cultural Resources of the San Diu ethnic group

The typical production culture of the San Diu ethnic group revolves around agriculture as the main livelihood, focusing on the cultivation of strong crops and leveraging the advantages of the hilly region.

Identifying agriculture as the main source of livelihood, the San Diu ethnic group in Dong Hy, Thai Nguyen province concentrate on developing agricultural production towards commodity production. Currently, a significant portion of the rice fields and flower cultivation areas have been converted to cultivate annual industrial crops such as tea, fruit trees, specialty vegetables, including strong crops like guava, apple, jackfruit, and cowpea.

The concentration on agricultural development by harnessing the advantages of the hilly region has somewhat changed the economic livelihood of households, providing them with more regular and stable incomes. Although these changes in production knowledge have not been significantly strong (they have occurred only in recent years), we assess them as a sustainable shift.

Traditional crafts

Using vegetation in the forest such as bamboo, rattan, rattan..., the knitting profession of the San Diu ethnic is very developed to create products to serve the needs of agricultural production, fishing and daily life. Most especially is *Tha* that is knitted with rattan or bamboo, has 4 wires that cross each other to put on shoulder

very convenient when going to the forest to gather or going to the stream to catch fish. In addition, the San Diu ethnic have many other creations from knitting to serve daily life.

Diverse culinary culture

Cuisine clearly reflects the cultural life of the ethnic. Through the eating habits of each ethnic group, we can find the elements of belief, spirituality, ethics, morality, fine customs and culinary tastes of that nation. The San Diu ethnic do not eat buffalo meat in some cases because the buffalo plays a big role in agricultural activities; Do not eat dog meat because in the spiritual concept, dogs saved the ethnic on the way to migrated to Vietnam.

The main food source of the San Diu ethnic is rice, products of agriculture. In particular, in the traditional meal of the San Diu ethnic, porridge is indispensable, San Diu language is *chao im* - Dilute porridge, drink instead of water, use daily as a snack in addition to 2 main meals. Food that is easy to eat and helps to quickly get healthy after tiring working hours. Food is prepared in many ways. Culinary culture is even more deeply expressed during the holidays with dishes imbued with national identity.

With a system of diverse and unique dishes and processing methods, the San Diu cuisine not only meets the dining needs of visitors but also creates an attraction for tourists in experiencing the food. and learn about ethnic cultural values such as daily life, production labor, spiritual concepts...

Rich spiritual life

The San Diu ethnic have many festivals, reflecting the rich spiritual life. The festival is born and practiced in the community, and is also the best environment to preserve and preserve ethnic culture, an opportunity to unite community members and share a sacred belief in the gods, enjoy the common pleasure. Festivals of the San Diu ethnic are organized according to the seasons of the year, every month there is a worship ceremony. There are also festivals related to agricultural beliefs, associated with the production season such as praying for the harvest, praying for rain, starting and ending the crop, Dai Phan festival... with the worship of the god of agriculture. , worshipping the souls of rice plants, worshipping ancestors, village lords... Agricultural beliefs not only play an important role in the spiritual life of the San Diu ethnic but also contribute to the formation of the cultural appearance of the ethnic group who live in the midlands.

The San Diu ethnic have rich folklore treasures: folk songs, proverbs, riddles, old stories, folk game... Musical instruments and dances are used mostly in spiritual rituals such as funerals, funerals, etc., reflecting the San Diu ethnic's conception of ethnic and the world. In terms of painting, the most unique is the system of worship paintings, reflecting the views of the San Diu ethnic in Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism.

The most unique and indispensable in the spiritual life of the San Diu ethnic is the folk song - *Soong Co*. *Soong Co* is written in a poetic form of 7 words and 4 sentences, in ancient Chinese characters. Performing *Soong Co* as a form of community stage clearly shows the cultural activities, customs, life concepts, thoughts and feelings of the members. The content of the lyrics praises the beautiful scenery of the homeland, the village, the scene of daily life, the love of the couple, the bond of humanity. Currently, in the villages, clubs have established *Soong Co* folk singing clubs. The exchange between hamlets, communes, districts and provinces is just a spontaneous activity but has an important meaning in preserving and teaching the unique culture of the ethnic group.

3.3. Harnessing the cultural resources for sustainable livelihood development

The San Diu ethnic group in Dong Hy, Thai Nguyen, are currently preserving and conserving their traditional culture. However, in the context of rapid socio-economic changes, without timely solutions, it may lead to dilution, fading, or even the loss of their cultural identity. Thai Nguyen is a province in the northern midland and mountainous region, serving as a gateway connecting the delta and mountainous areas, benefiting from its advantageous geographical location, transportation, and policy incentives. We boldly propose several solutions to explore the unique cultural potentials of the San Diu ethnic group in tourism development, as a new livelihood direction aiming at socio-economic growth and sustainable cultural preservation.

Firstly, it is crucial to capitalize on cultural values and transform them into tangible commodities to serve tourism. This can be achieved by incorporating cultural elements into experiential activities in selected villages. Building cultural-focused programs introduced and shared by respected individuals within the community, cultural experts, or tour guides. Organizing events to showcase traditional festivals, customs, folk games, folk songs, dances, exhibitions, and promoting local specialties. Based on these initiatives, local authorities, tourism businesses, and the community can collaborate to implement experiential programs for students at all levels, following the existing experiential education and local curriculum. As tourism businesses explore tourism products at these destinations, the local community, as the cultural custodians, will also benefit from increased income by serving tourists.

Organizing creative competitions in science and technology within educational institutions to foster students' proactiveness, innovation, and the utilization of practical experience and existing cultural traditions in preserving and promoting traditional culture. For example, designing souvenir products inspired by traditional handicrafts, creating advertising flyers showcasing cultural characteristics, developing promotional videos highlighting natural and cultural attractions, compiling folklore handbooks with cultural interpretations and translations from the perspective of the ethnic community. When these activities are turned into competitions and integrated into the students' academic performance evaluation, it will garner support from families and the community, contributing to the spread of cultural preservation movements while promoting cultural values. When these cultural products become tourism products, they will generate income for the community.

Establishing traditional performing arts clubs ready to serve tourists in groups or individually

To leverage traditional craftsmanship, it is essential to collaborate with skilled artisans to engage tourists in experiential activities that involve creating handmade products or developing them into souvenirs for tourism.

The picturesque hills and landscapes, where the San Diu ethnic group reside, attract tourists with their agricultural activities. It is possible to plan cultural production experience areas, such as participating in traditional farming techniques using the the San Diu ethnic group's unique tools and engaging in other production activities. In particular, leveraging the advantages of the hilly region's fruit cultivation (such as guava and apple) and specialty vegetable farming, it is possible to establish on-site agricultural harvesting experience areas and design scenic check-in spots that highlight the uniqueness of the landscape.

Developing a culture of agricultural production with a focus on producing goods and increasing the value of agricultural products is crucial. This can be achieved by registering production and conducting business operations according to Vietgap standards, developing agricultural products into One Commune One Product (OCOP) items to establish brands with geographical references, enhance competitiveness, and expand the market for these products.

Integrating culture with the cultural industry by creating promotional materials and products that introduce and showcase traditional cultural values. Platforms such as YouTube channels, TikTok accounts, photo books, and promotional videos can be utilized to introduce the San Diu culture to tourists. These endeavors not only serve as a means to spread cultural awareness but also generate income for cultural entities. Constructing community cultural centers following a model of a small museum that introduces the history and cultural values of the ethnic group. These centers can also serve as venues for cultural performances, community activities, and hands-on experiences in traditional crafts to cater to the research, learning, and experiential needs of tourists.

Secondly, integrate cultural conservation and promotion with the goal of building a new rural area to develop economic livelihoods, create local employment opportunities, increase community income, and reduce the poverty rate. This should be done in alignment with the overall objectives of socio-economic development. Thirdly, conduct an inventory, establish a list, and compile documentation for the recognition of provincial and national-level cultural heritage sites. This will ensure that cultural resources receive attention, investment, and development opportunities for creating new livelihoods linked to tourism.

Fourthly, develop human resources by enhancing the quality of cultural officers working at the village, district, and provincial levels. They should possess the necessary expertise to formulate conservation and promotion plans for cultural heritage in line with the objectives of socio-economic development, particularly in serving tourism to generate new livelihoods for the community.

Provide training for cultural officers in skills and professional knowledge related to cultural exploitation in tourism development. This will enable them to effectively disseminate information and guide the community in conserving and promoting cultural heritage alongside socio-economic development. As they are the human resources at the grassroots level, familiar with and closely connected to the local community, their understanding of the role of tourism in cultural conservation can serve as a motivating force for socio-economic development. This will help individuals in the community undergo changes in perception and thinking regarding the importance of cultural conservation and promotion.

Organize training programs for the local community in exploring the cultural value for tourism purposes, including accommodation, cuisine, communication, etc. This can be done through direct training sessions or through visits and learning from Community-Based Tourism (CBT) models. By doing so, the local community will become more prepared and proactive in participating in Community-Based Tourism (CBT). Particularly, as the skills and knowledge of the local community are enhanced, they will become professional and persuasive ambassadors of ethnic cultural image, attracting tourists in the most effective and appealing manner.

IV. CONCLUSION

Protecting and promoting the cultural resources of ethnic minority groups in development not only ensures the existence of a cultural entity but also contributes to sustainable socio-economic development. This process involves direct community participation in the exploitation and utilization of cultural resources to promote the development of cultural products and services, thereby reaping economic and social benefits. The uniqueness of the ethnic cultural identity is an advantage in community-based tourism development, which can create new livelihoods for the San Diu ethnic group.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research was financially supported by a science project at Thai Nguyen University, code DH2020-TN06-02.

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