Restoring Community-Based Tourism after Flooding: A Case Study of Ban Hua Thang Community-Based Tourism Enterprise, La-ngu District, Satun Province, Thailand

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Abstract

This paper aimed to: (1) explore the tourism background and flood impacts on the Ban Hua Thang Community-Based Tourism Enterprise in La-ngu Subdistrict, La-ngu District, Satun Province; and (2) develop participatory approaches for restoring community-based tourism after flooding. This paper is based on a qualitative study. Two major qualitative research techniques are employed: participant observation and in-depth interview. Research duration was 4 months (November 2025 to February 2026). Findings revealed that Ban Hua Thang is a coastal community characterized by rich mangrove ecosystems along La-ngu Canal. Its distinctive attractions include dense mangrove apple forests and large populations of fireflies. Local livelihoods primarily depend on small-scale fisheries and fish cage aquaculture, forming the foundation of the community's economy. The community has collectively managed eco-tourism to generate income while conserving natural resources. Integrating local livelihoods with environmental conservation has supported economic balance and long-term sustainability. However, severe flooding in November 2025 caused extensive damage to mangrove apple forests and firefly habitats—key tourism assets. Tourist arrivals declined almost entirely, affecting the incomes of fisheries networks and women's groups. Although ecological adjustments were observed, such as increased shellfish populations, the community faced major challenges in restoring resources and rebuilding tourist confidence. Participatory recovery initiatives included multimedia promotion on community-based tourism and the restoration of tourism check-in points. Disaster management strategic proposal emphasized a holistic "prepare–respond–recover" framework, including prone area mapping, CCTV warning systems, crisis communication planning, and resilient infrastructure rebuilding to ensure both ecological sustainability and community-based tourism recovery.

Keywords: Community-Based Tourism, Flooding, Restoration, Recovery

Introduction

Satun is a small province in Southern Thailand that is located along the coast of the Andaman Sea. It possesses almost 100 islands; some are considered as the most beautiful islands of the Andaman Sea. Besides its picturesque islands, Satun also features some attractions about culture and local way of lives. As Satun borders Malaysia, a majority of Satun's population is Muslim, many of whom are of Malaysian descent, adding a colourful character to the town, particularly in regard to food and clothing. Fortunately for the people of Satun and visitors to the area, Satun has been largely unaffected by the domestic unrest in the south and is a quiet and safe place to

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visit. Satun town, the province's capital, is a sleepy town that typically only sees travellers who are en route to either the offshore islands or Malaysia. However, mainland Satun does feature the Thale Ban National Park, which contains a number of waterfalls and a large lagoon surrounded by towering mountains (Tourism Authority of Thailand, https://www.tourismthailand.org).

Figure 1 Map of Satun Province
Source: Tourism Authority of Thailand

Figure 2 Tourist Attractions in Satun Province
Source: Tourism Authority of Thailand

Table 1 The Situation of Satun Tourism in the Year 2025

Item	Numbers (Person)	Value (Million Baht)
Thai visitors	1,911,953	10,530.97
Foreign visitors	479,218	2,909.64
Total	2,391,171	13,440.61

Source: Ministry of Tourism and Sports

Unfortunately, Thailand experienced widespread flooding across southern provinces in November 2025. Satun Province was among the most severely affected areas, with significant damage reported in all districts. Satun Floods were worsen as Mountain Runoff Swamps La-ngu District. All 7 districts in Satun Province remained flooded during November 17-28, 2025. Runoff from the Banthat and Sankalakhiri Mountain Ranges, combined with heavy accumulated rainfall, has surged into low-lying La-ngu District—the final drainage point before the sea. Water levels rose rapidly, submerging many villages in Kamphaeng and La-ngu subdistricts under more than 2 meters of water in some areas. Homes and commercial zones have sustained severe damage. Flooding disrupted economic activities and severely affected tourism (Khaosod English, 2025).

Figure 3 Floods Situation in Satun Province
Source: Khaosod, Thai PBS, NBT on 26-28 November 2025

This paper aimed to: (1) explore the tourism background and flood impacts on the Ban Hua Thang Community-Based Tourism Enterprise in La-ngu Subdistrict, La-ngu District, Satun Province; and (2) develop participatory approaches for restoring community-based tourism after flooding. The Ban Hua Thang Community-Based Tourism Enterprise is recognized as one of best practice for community-based eco-tourism. This community suffered substantial damage by flooding. In addition to physical destruction—such as sediment accumulation in waterways, shoreline erosion, and damaged nature trails—the most critical impact was the loss of tourist confidence, resulting in an abrupt decline in tourism income.

Field observations and pilot stakeholder discussions indicated that tourism recovery required a participatory approach involving community members, who acquire deep understanding of local historical and background. Engaging local stakeholders in planning and implementation was essential to strengthening community resilience and enabling sustainable recovery.

Research Objectives

1. To explore the tourism background and flood impacts on the Ban Hua Thang Community-Based Tourism Enterprise.
2. To develop participatory approaches for restoring community-based tourism after flooding.

Literature Review

Kobkarn Prapasavat and Uthai Laohavichien (2023) aims to 1) Study the community-based flood disaster management approach: case studies in Khon Kaen and Songkhla provinces. 2) To study the nature of community participation and level in community-based flood disaster management, a case study in Khon Kaen and Songkhla provinces. 3) To study the problems of community-based flood disaster management, case studies in Khon Kaen and Songkhla provinces. 4) Propose guidelines for community-based disaster management a case study of Khon Kaen and Songkhla provinces. The research methodology used a qualitative case study approach, with in-depth interviews of 30 key informants 15 per province from regional organizations, local government organizations, and communities involved in disaster management based on community involvement. In addition, document analysis and non - participant observation were used, and data were analyzed using inductive analysis and cross-case analysis. The study found that 1) community-based disaster management was the foundation of both case studies, which involved dividing the disaster management process into three stages: before, during, and after the event. This was done in the form of a committee and working group appointed by the provincial governor, in compliance with the Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Act of 2007. 2) The nature of community participation involved community surveillance, participation in meetings, expression of opinions, and the establishment of community volunteers. The level of community participation in both cases was only nominal. 3) Regarding the problem of community-based disaster management in both cases, the study found that there was a problem with insufficient budget allocation for disaster management, even though there had been joint planning among various sectors. 4) Recommendations included the need for government agencies to genuinely involve the community in disaster management, and the need to amend laws to promote participation at all levels, in order to reduce risk for the community. It is also important to enhance the knowledge, capabilities of both government agencies, communities in disaster management, to maximize the benefits and efficiency of community capabilities. From the cross-synthesis of the two community-based flood disaster management case studies, it was found that the disaster

management approaches were similar. Things that are different. Songkhla has a plan at the community level for each community, with all sectors participating in planning and providing disaster knowledge to the community. A flood map is prepared. Create a map of vulnerable groups and the preparation of a nanny house or head of the alleys. In doing this kind of operation, the province of Khon Kaen does not operate. And different contributions by Khon Kaen Province Participation was at level 4, consultation level, and Songkhla was at level 5, which was just a consolation.

Chayathat Niamsawaeng and Chamlong Poboon (2020) study and find out the ways for community-based disaster risk management from flash flood caused by failure of Mae Suai Dam located in Chaingrai Province. This study adopted the qualitative approaches of action research including group interview, in-depth interview, focus group discussion, and workshop with 60 key informants from 6 Mae Suai communities, consisting of local leaders, local wisdoms, community committees, and leaders of community organizations. The data were collected for 2 years (2014-2016) and analyzed by content analysis. The results showed that there were 3 stages of flash flood disaster risk management: 1) preparedness before disaster event, 2) encountering disaster event and 3) revival after disaster event. Preparedness comprised housing management and community organization, water resource management, databased of disaster risk group development and warning system development. Encountering disaster included the determination of migration routes, safety areas and shelter areas. Moreover, crisis communication procedures, coordination of assistance from agencies in the neighborhood for example Chiang Rai Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Office, Mae Suai Hospital, 37th Army District and mass media were determined. Finally, the revival after the disaster focused on rehabilitation of agricultural area and restoration of houses by skilled local people.

Pissamai Srinate and Anchana Na Ranong (2018) study flood disaster management, and to identify community capitals related to community capacities to deal with disasters. The research was focused on 2 communities : 1) the community of BangTa Phaen, Tambon Klongwau, Amphur Mueang Angthong, Angthong Province, and 2) the community of Tha Bong Mung, Mueang Warinchamrap Municipality, Ubonratchathani Province. A qualitative research approach was used and data were collected by documentary research and field work data that included in-depth interviews, focus group interviews, and observations. The study found that the 2 communities had similar disaster management. However, Bang Ta Phaen community is able to manage flood disaster by self-management. After flood, the community evaluated and reviewed to find new solutions to prevent and mitigate future problems. Tha Bong Mung community collaborated with the Mueang Warinchamrap Municipality coping with disasters. Community capitals related to community capacities to cope with disaster, including social capital, human capital, political capital, financial capital, and physical capital are available in the both communities. Villagers use the capitals to deal with and reduce the risk of disasters. In additions, the study showed that Bang Ta Phean community has more community assets than Tha Bong Mung community. Therefore, the first one can better handle flood disaster.

Research Methodology

This paper is based on a qualitative study. The research employed two major qualitative research techniques in the fieldwork: participant observation and in-depth interview. Participant observation involves living among the people under study for a lengthy period and gathering data through continuous involvement in their lives and activities; it is appropriate for collecting data on naturally occurring behaviours in their usual contexts (O'Reilly, 2005). In-

depth interviews are optimal for collecting data on the personal histories, perspectives, and experiences of individuals. Several other informal research methods were utilised, including informal interviewing and general observation. In this research, six key person of the Ban Hua Thang Community-Based Tourism Enterprise generated the core data of the study. Fieldwork duration was 4 months (November 2025 to February 2026). Data analysis was conducted using content analysis, and findings were presented descriptively. It is important to note that this paper is part of Practicum in Community Administration and Development for the 2025 academic year

Results

1. Tourism Background and Flood Impacts

Ban Hua Thang is a coastal community adjacent to the Andaman Sea, surrounded by mountainous terrain and mangrove forests. La-ngu Canal plays a crucial ecological role by supporting biodiversity and providing water resources.

The community's ecological identity is defined by dense mangrove apple forests that serve as habitats for fireflies along more than two kilometers of the canal. These ecosystems also function as natural coastal protection and nursery grounds for aquatic species.

Local livelihoods rely heavily on small-scale fisheries and fish cage aquaculture, which also support tourism through educational and experiential activities.

The November 2025 flood caused severe damage to tourism infrastructure, including erosion of travel routes, destruction of scenic viewpoints, and loss of mangrove apple trees. As a result, firefly tourism—the community's primary attraction—was significantly affected.

Tourist arrivals declined almost entirely within one month, severely impacting the broader tourism supply chain, including fishermen, local producers, boat operators, and guides.

Figure 4 Community-Based Tourism in Ban Hua Thang
Source: The Ban Hua Thang Community-Based Tourism Enterprise

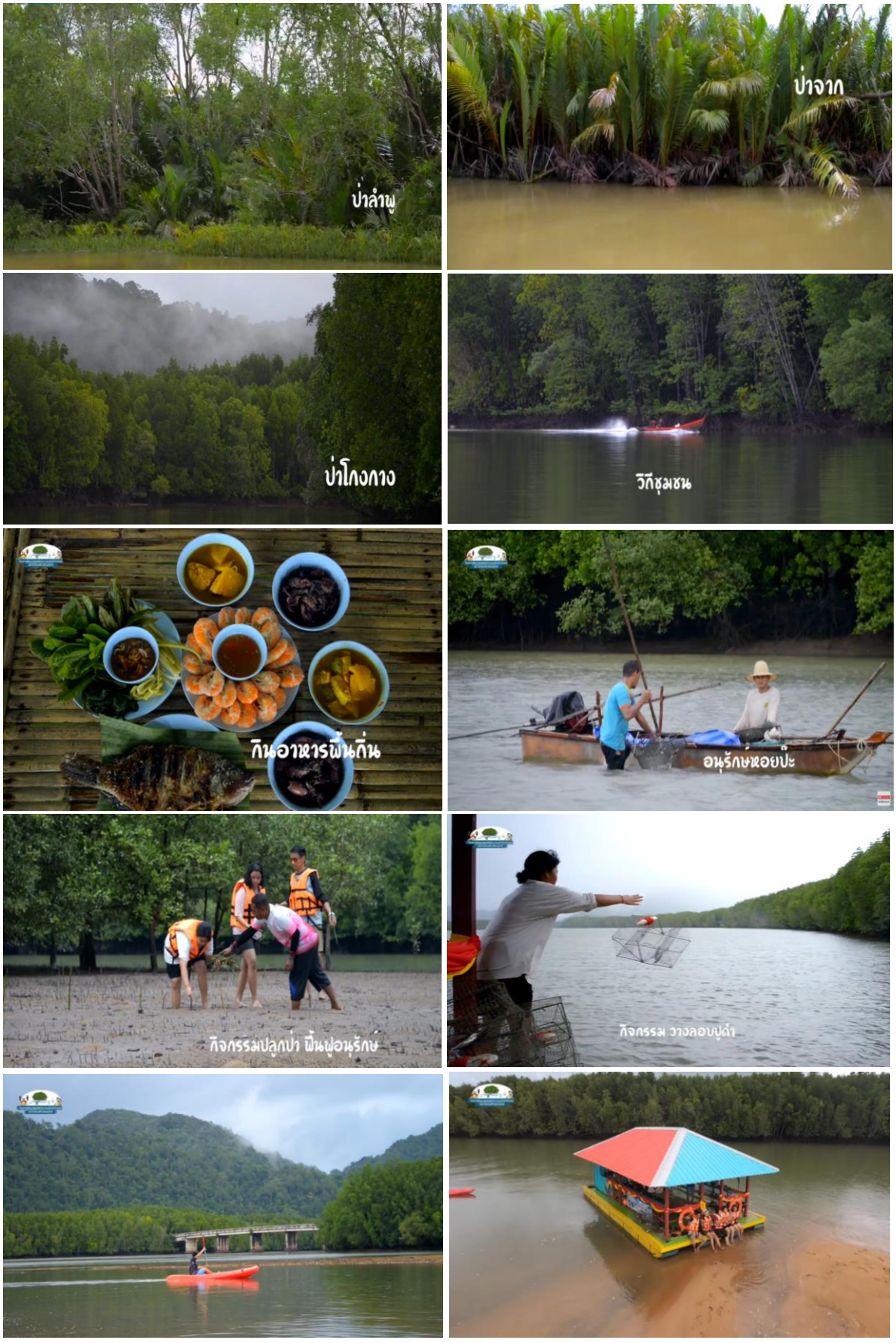

Figure 5 Key Tourism Assets in Ban Hua Thang
Source: The Ban Hua Thang Community-Based Tourism Enterprise

Figure 6 Floods impacts in Ban Hua Thang
Source: Ananya Lawan

2. Restoring Community-Based Tourism after Flooding

Fieldwork observations and stakeholder discussions indicated that tourism recovery required a participatory approach involving community members, who have deep understanding of local context and background. Engaging local stakeholders in planning and implementation was essential to strengthening community resilience and enabling sustainable recovery.

Participatory recovery initiatives included multimedia promotion on community-based tourism and the restoration of tourism check-in points.

Tourism Promotional Multimedia:

A multimedia promotional video clip was developed to enhance public awareness and communicate the community's restored identity. The video clip highlighted rehabilitated natural landscapes, local culture, and tourism programs. Distributed through digital platforms, particularly social media, it served as a cost-effective tool for rebuilding tourist confidence and strengthening community pride.

Restoration of Check-in Points:

Damaged tourism infrastructure and scenic viewpoints were restored through participatory collaboration among community members. New signage and check-in points were designed using durable materials suitable for coastal conditions. This process fostered a strong sense of ownership among residents and symbolized the community's recovery.

Figure 7 Restoration of Check-in Points
Source: Ananya Lawan

Disaster Management Strategic Proposal:

The Ban Hua Thang Community-Based Tourism Enterprise proposed disaster management strategic plan that emphasized a holistic "prepare–respond–recover" framework, including prone area mapping, CCTV warning setting up, crisis communication planning, and resilient infrastructure rebuilding to ensure both ecological sustainability and community-based tourism recovery. In this research, three key phases of disaster management were identified.

(1) Risk Reduction: Development of risk-area databases, mapping of vulnerable zones, and establishment of digital early warning systems linked to water monitoring stations.

(2) Crisis Response: Detecting the crisis, activating the response plan, limiting damage, and maintaining clear communication with stakeholders.

(3) Post-Disaster Recovery: Reconstruction of resilient infrastructure, proactive multimedia communication, and strengthened stakeholder collaboration to support sustainable adaptation.

Discussion and Conclusion

Tourism is vulnerable to a broader range of crises than other sectors and their occurrence tends to be more frequent in the sector. Disasters may result in disruption of transport services and travel such as cancellation of flights, and damage of transportation infrastructure and some physical tourist attractions. In turn, the economy also suffers, especially in countries that are heavily dependent on the sector when hazards/risks impact on the transportation services; accommodation and hospitality services; travel distribution systems; and providers of other tourist amenities, the tourism sector is affected negatively. Tourism sector contributes differently across the phases of disaster risk management (DRM) but is mainly significant in terms of information sharing and communication. More fundamental changes can be observed in the long-term recovery and resolution phases, whereby tourism is mostly important in information collection, experience learning in DRM, institutional reform and strategic development of sustainable tourism frameworks and post-disaster tourist destination marketing. Accordingly, the premise on which this approach is grounded is that of tourism as a victim of disasters. It aims to guide disaster risk mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. Thus, the role of the tourism sector in managing disasters risks will be enunciated in each of the four cyclical stages of DRM, in line with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) framework. Further, crisis communication, being an integral part of the envisioned approach, will be woven throughout the cycle (Faulkner, B., 2001).

The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) identifies a cycle of four phases: 1) Mitigation - Minimizing the effects of disaster. Examples include building early warning, development of codes and zoning; vulnerability analyses; and public education. 2) Preparedness - Planning how to respond. Examples are preparedness plans; emergency exercises/training; and warning systems. 3) Response - Efforts to minimize the hazards created by a disaster. Examples include search and rescue; emergency relief; and 4) Recovery - Returning the community to normalcy. Examples are temporary housing; grants; and medical care. Disaster risk management strategies are needed to help retain the confidence of travellers and the tourism sector, and to minimize the impact of a disaster on the tourist destination. Managing the risk of disasters is aimed at protecting persons and their property, health, livelihoods and productive assets, as well as cultural and environmental assets, while promoting and protecting all human rights, including the right to development (De Silva, Amaratunga, & Haigh, 2022).

Crisis communications is a critical component of disaster risk management. Good communications based on the principles of honesty and transparency are the key to successful disaster risk management, from the mitigation to recovery stages. Thus, communications should not take place only when a disaster hits a destination, rather, from the Mitigation phase (i.e., identification and managing disaster risks). The goal of this approach is to improve and defend the tourism reputation, image and competitiveness of the region.

This paper argues that effective disaster risk management in the tourism sector requires robust collaboration among diverse stakeholders. This strategy emphasizes the critical need to strengthen and formalize partnerships between tourism stakeholders, government agencies, and local communities to build comprehensive resilience. Key aspects of this enhanced collaboration include: 1. Inter-agency Cooperation: Fostering stronger links between national tourism organizations, disaster management agencies, meteorological departments, and other relevant government bodies to ensure coordinated planning and response. 2. Public-Private Partnerships: Encouraging active engagement between government entities and private sector tourism businesses in the development and implementation of disaster risk management strategies. 3. Community Involvement: Integrating local communities into the disaster risk management process, recognizing their unique knowledge of local conditions and their role as first responders in many crisis situations. 4. Regional Coordination: Facilitating collaboration among local members to address transboundary risks and share best practices in tourism-related disaster management. 5. Information Sharing: Establishing effective mechanisms for the timely exchange of critical information among all stakeholders before, during, and after disasters. 6. Joint Training and Exercises: Conducting regular multi-stakeholder disaster simulation exercises to test and improve collaborative response capabilities. 7. Inclusive Planning: Ensuring that all relevant stakeholders, including representatives from vulnerable groups within the tourism sector, are involved in the disaster risk management planning process.

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