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Thesis for the Degree of Master of Arts in Global and Area Studies

**“Genuine” Participation for Successful  
Community Based Tourism:  
A Case Study in Myaing Township, Myanmar**

by

Shwe Ya Min

Department of Global and Area Studies

The Graduate School

Pukyong National University

February 2021

# **“Genuine” Participation for Successful Community Based Tourism: A Case Study in Myaing Township, Myanmar**

(지역사회기반관광(CBT)과 “진정한” 주민참여: 미얀마 마잉(Myaing)사례 연구)

Advisor: Prof. Bub Mo Jung

by  
Shwe Ya Min

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
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Pukyong National University

February 2021

“Genuine” Participation for Successful Community Based Tourism:  
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February 19, 2021

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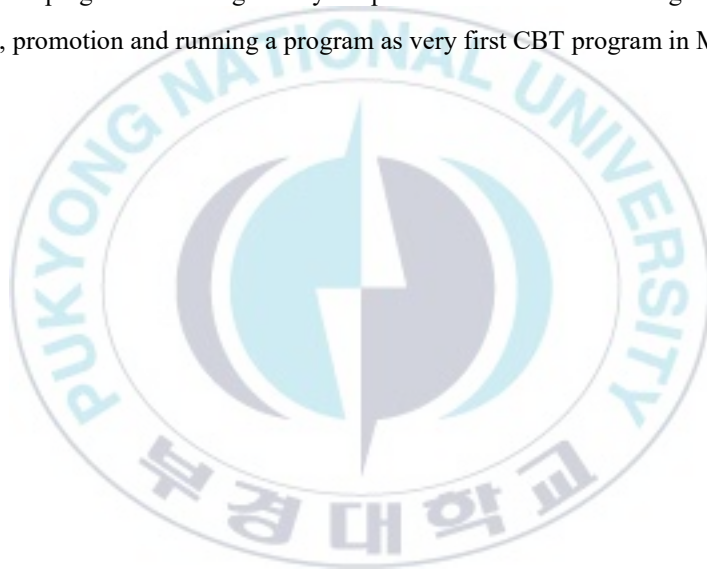
**Abstract**

Myanmar ended isolation periods in the world in 2011. Since then, The government finds a way to develop in the economic sector by the enchanting tourism industry. Community based tourism and eco-tourism emerged in 2014. Tourism can create many job opportunities and economic development but cannot get equally affect poverty reduction. There also harm environmental, socio-culture, and other areas. So as an alternative way of tourism, community based tourism emerged. The new government wants to focus on rural development in economic, socio-cultural, and environmental aspects. That is the reason for the community based tourism implementation in Myanmar.

This research aims to analyze how the local community changes by participating in the community based tourism program and any further community development to sustainable development in the local community. As the methods used for this study, I applied a qualitative research method with a case study approach. Data were collected through observation at Myaing CBT, a case study site, in-depth interviews with 16 participants, five members of staff, one regional government official, and two members of staff from Action Aid Myanmar. Data collection was conducted in January 2019 and 2020 at the Myaing CBT site. According to the research, there are a lot of potentials such as improvement in women empowerment, good



infrastructure development, substantial financial support and fund, the training for the capability of services and quality of products, proper transparent, legal plans and policies, the hospitality of host community and high willingness and strong community participation for community developing even though they experienced several challenges such as CBT implementation, promotion and running a program as very first CBT program in Myanmar. support and fund, the training for the capability of services and quality of products, proper transparent, legal plans and policies, the hospitality of host community and high willingness and strong community participation for community developing even though they experienced several challenges such as CBT implementation, promotion and running a program as very first CBT program in Myanmar.



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### 한글 요약

미얀마는 2011년, 전 세계와의 고립 정책을 종료했다. 그 이후, 정부는 관광산업의 활성화를 통해 경제를 성장시킬 수 있는 관광산업의 활성화 방안을 찾기 시작했다. 관광산업은 많은 일자리를 창출하여 경제를 발전시켰지만, 직접적인 빈곤율을 감소시키기는 어려웠으며 환경, 사회, 문화, 그리고 다른 분야에 부정적인 영향을 미치기도 한다. 이러한 단점을 보완하여 기존 관광산업에 대한 대안으로 지역사회기반관광(CBT, community based tourism)이 등장하였다. 미얀마의 새로운 정부는 농촌 지역의 경제, 사회와 문화와 환경적인 측면의 발전을 지향하기에 지역사회기반관광이 시행되고 있다.

본 연구는 지역사회기반관광 프로그램에 참여함으로써 지역사회가 어떻게 변화하는지 분석하고, 지속가능한 발전을 위해 어떤 요소가 필요한지 연구하는 것을 목적으로

한다. 본 연구를 위해 미얀마에서 최초로 지역사회기반관광 프로그램에 참여한 마잉(Myaing) CBT현장을 2019년 1월, 2020년 1월 두 차례 방문하여 조사를 진행하였다. 마잉의 CBT프로그램 참가자 16명, 직원 5명, 지역 공무원 1명, NGO 단체 직원 2명을 대상으로 심층 면접을 실행하여 자료를 수집하여 분석하였다. 해당 프로그램 참가자들은 CBT의 실행, 홍보, 그리고 운영에서 여러 어려움에도 불구하고 지역사회 여성 역량 향상, 인프라 개발, 강력한 재정적 지원과 기금 확보, 적절한 투명성, 법적인 계획과 정책, 해당 지역사회의 환대와 지역민의 높은 참여 의지, 공동체 결속력 강화 등의 여러 분야에서 지역사회 발전을 가능하게 하는 잠재력이 있음을 알 수 있었다.



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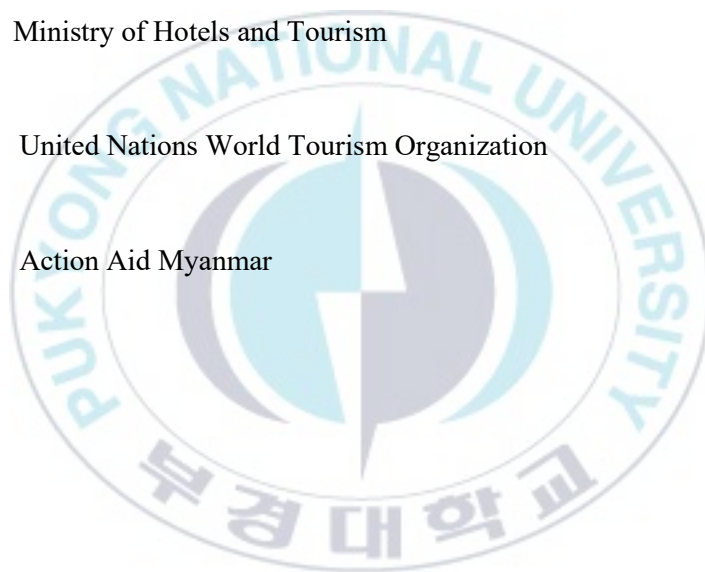
Furthermore, I would like to express my gratitude to my grandmother, parents, little brother, auntie, relatives for their love, financial support, and encouragement throughout my study. Without them, it would be impossible for me to complete my study. Also, I express my thanks to my sisters - Ma Yu, Ma K, Cho, Sis Sarah, Hayeong, Nuri, Thom, for a cherished time spent together in school and social settings. Special thanks to MSS for emotional encouragement.

Shwe Ya Min

February 2021

## Abbreviations

<b>CBT</b>	Community Based Tourism
<b>MOHT</b>	Ministry of Hotels and Tourism
<b>UNWTO</b>	United Nations World Tourism Organization
<b>AAM</b>	Action Aid Myanmar



# **I . Background of Studies**

Myanmar ended isolation periods in the world in 2011. Since then, the government finds a way to develop in the economic sector by the enchanting tourism industry. Community based tourism and eco-tourism emerged in 2014. Tourism can create many job opportunities and economic development but can not get equally affect poverty reduction. It is also harmful to the environment, social culture, and other areas. So as an alternative way of tourism, community based tourism emerged. The new government wants to focus on rural development in economic, social, cultural, and environmental aspects.

This research aims to analyze how local community change by participating in the community based tourism program and any further community development to sustainable development in local communities. As the methods used for this study, I applied a qualitative research method with a case study approach. Data were collected through observation at Myaing CBT, a case study site, in-depth interviews with 16 participants, five staff members of Myaing CBT, one of the regional government officials, and two staff members from Action Aid Myanmar. Data collection was conducted in January 2019 and 2020 at the Myaing CBT site. According to the research, there are a lot

of potentials such as improvement in women empowerment, good infrastructure development, strong in financial support and fund, the training for the capability of services and quality of products, proper transparent, legal plans and policies, the hospitality of host community and high willingness and strong community participation for community developing even though they experienced several challenges such as CBT implementation, promotion and running program as very first CBT program in Myanmar. The community's involvement is a tool for solving tourism-related problems in developing countries (Brohman, 1996). It is crucial to keep tourism development simple by facing CBT on the regional government to promote CBT projects by following up on Myaing CBT's infrastructures.

In this study, I chose Myaing CBT as the case study area because this is the first CBT in Myanmar and well operating among Myanmar CBT. There are 30 villages around Myaing and 81 townships in the Myaing area. The Myaing CBT is currently running by four villages [Sulae Pan, Inn Young, East Kangyi taw, West Kangyi taw]. The rights holders of the Myaing CBT will be villagers who live in four villages near the CBT site in Myaing Township. In Myaing CBT, there are two days one night package, three days two nights package, Pakokku CBT day return package, Swa Taw village (Meikhtila township on high way road CBT day return package).

## **1.1. The Impacts of Community Based Tourism**

CBT generates economic development and improves the communities' livelihoods through community members' participation in tourism activities without damaging the cultural and environmental resources within their communities (Tasci, Semrad & Yilmaz, 2013). CBT is defined as tourism owned and managed by communities, and that intended to deliver wider community benefits (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009, p.11). Community based tourism development would seek to strengthen institutions designed to enhance local participation and promote the popular majority's economic, social, and cultural well-being. That would also seek to strike a balanced and harmonious approach to develop that would stress considerations such as the compatibility of various forms of tourism with other components of the local economy, the quality of development, both culturally and environmentally, and the divergent needs, interests, and potentials of the community and its inhabitants (Brohman, 1996, p.60). In The Mountain Institute, 2000, community based tourism is an activity that can provide widespread economic and other benefits and decision-making power through increased intensities of participation. So the concepts of community based tourism are generally similar. CBT should be for, by, and with the local community to improve their livelihood and quality of life, especially for rural communities. The community members must involve in every single tourism



activity and have participated and voiced out in decision making, planning, and operation processes.

The main objectives of community based tourism are to increase incomes for the community, to sustain the revenues in the local economy, to empower the community, conserve cultural heritages, improve the positive attitudes in natural resources management and wildlife conservation, and develop sustainable tourism (Blakstock, 2005, as cited in Demers, 2011, p.1). CBT is principally focused on active community participation and, like a sustainable model with a bottom-up approach in maintaining, management, implementation, and planning of tourism development and community participation contributes to the development and sustainability of the tourism industry (Boonratana, 2010; Goodwin & Santilli, 2009; Hall 1994; Suansri 2003). Community participation in tourism development encourages solving major problems in destination CBT generates economic development and improves the communities' livelihoods through community members' participation in tourism activities without damaging their communities' cultural and environmental resources (Tasci, Semrad & Yilmaz, 2013). CBT is defined as tourism owned and managed by the community and intended to deliver more comprehensive community benefits (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009, p.11). Community based tourism development would seek to strengthen institutions designed to enhance local participation and promote the popular majority's economic, social, and cultural well-being. That would also seek to strike a balanced and harmonious approach to

develop that would stress considerations such as the compatibility of various forms of tourism with other components of the local economy, the quality of development, both culturally and environmentally, and the divergent needs, interests, and potentials of the community and its inhabitants (Brohman, 1996, p.60). In The Mountain Institute, 2000, community based tourism is an activity that can provide widespread economic and other benefits and decision-making power through increased intensities of participation. So the concepts of community based tourism are generally similar. CBT should be for, by, and with the local community to improve their livelihood and quality of life, especially for rural communities. The community members must involve in every single tourism activity and have participated and voiced out in decision making, planning, and operation processes.

Community based tourism's main objectives are to increase incomes for the community, sustain the revenues in the local economy, empower the community, conserve cultural heritages, improve the positive attitudes in natural resources management and wildlife conservation, and develop sustainable tourism (Blakstock, 2005, as cited in Demers, 2011, p.1). CBT is principally focused on active community participation and, like a sustainable model with a bottom-up approach in maintaining, management, implementation, and planning of tourism development and community participation contributes to the development and sustainability of the tourism industry (Boonratana, 2010; Goodwin & Santilli, 2009; Hall, 1994; Suansri, 2003). Community

participation in tourism development encourages solving significant problems in destination communities and will support the equal distribution of benefits among the community development members (Brohman, 1996). Communities will support the equal distribution of benefits among the community development members (Brohman, 1996).



## **II . Literature Review and Methodology**

### **2.1. Literature Review of Community and Community Development**

This chapter reviews relevant literature from different sources for this research. This chapter defines the meanings, theories, and concepts about community development, the interaction between tourism and community development through community based tourism. The concepts of CBT, benefits, and challenges while implementing the CBT project and how to measure the CBT project's success were also reviewed.

“Community” is defined as “people who live within a geographically defined area and who have social and psychological ties with each other and with a place where they live” (Mattessich & Monsey, 2004, p.6). And Frank & Smith (1999) also defined “community” in terms of culture, language, beliefs, and shared interests. The community also offers varieties of tourism resources and services that may be attractions, accommodation, tourism-related infrastructures, etc. (Telfer, 2003). From the tourism point of view, “community” can be defined as a multidimensional phenomenon with many forms and

different scales that are socio-economic, cultural, political, and environmental. As for this study, “community” will be defined as the geographical locations where people live and share common interests under the rule of the same state government.

“Development” can be defined as the quality improvement of livelihood of a human being as an economic phenomenon for generating job opportunities and support for the communities’ socio-economic benefits. The three fundamental objectives of development are to be able to distribute the basic human needs in every daily life, improve living standard with higher incomes and have better chances for education and bigger concentration on cultural and human values, and increase more economic opportunities for individuals and nations (Todaro & Smith, 2003).

“Community development” can be defined as a process designed to create conditions of economic and social progress for the whole community with its active participation and the fullest possible reliance on the community’s initiative (United Nations, 1955, P.6). The essential core of community development is the improvement of the quality of life and conserving the sustainability of human capital and resources (Frank & Smith, 1999). Community development is a broad concept, and researches on community development have been conducted in many academic fields, and it is a global concentration of the development of urban communities in terms of economic, socio-cultural well-beings and community empowerment for the long term sustainable development of the tourism industry, especially in developing countries (Singh, 2008). Community development is a

“grassroots development” by which communities; become more responsible, organize and plan together, develop healthy options, empower themselves, reduce ignorance, poverty, and suffering, create employment and economic opportunities and achieve social, economic, cultural and environmental goals (Frank & Smith, 1999, P.6). In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the global economy is driven by three main industries, such as technology, tourism, and telecommunication (Adeleke, 2006). Especially, tourism becomes the greatest growth industry in the world and a major tool for community development (Allen, Hafer, Long&perdue, 1993). Tourism is an increasingly popular elixir to the local community and urban underdevelopment (Frederick,1993). Tourism also can be a powerful tool for community development (Suansri, 2003, p.21).

## **2.2. Literature Review of Community Based Tourism (CBT)**

The community based tourism (CBT) idea was originally formulated in Canada based on the community based development approach (Giampiccoli, 2015; King & Pearlman, 2009; Telfer, 2009). Community based tourism is alternative types of tourism, such as community based tourism, eco-tourism, ethnic tourism, pro-poor tourism, and rural tourism to remote rural areas (Novelli, 2016). And this has become worldwide spread and an important alternative form of tourism development for many countries such as Thailand, Indonesia, Cambodia, The Caribbean, Europe, and Africa (Amin & Ibrahim,

2015). The community should maintain and manage the CBT development process, and CBT is focused on local empowerment, capacity building, host community involvement in planning and decision making by a grassroots approach of a destination society to create a more sustainable industry (Leksakundilok & Hirsch, 2008; Prachvuthy, 2006). Community based tourism contributes to the three pillars of sustainability through distributing economic, environmental, and social benefits that empower the local communities and builds community capacity to manage their resources (Asker, Boronyak, Carrad & Paddon, 2010). Community based tourism becomes popular in the mid-1990s, reversing the development as a bottom-up approach to provide full community participation at every level of the development process (Askerm Boronyak, Carrard & Paddon, 2010). The CBT model is formulated as a pathway for the economic development of undeveloped regions (such as poor, impoverished, marginalized people in rural and remote areas (Muganda, 2009; as cited in Ndlovu, 2015). And CBT also should be applied as a device for social equality, distribution of resources and benefits, and the community should receive a large sum of benefits (Giampiccoli, 2015).

CBT is centered on the local community, active participation of the community, and community development. Some CBT projects are failing because of deficiencies of important factors such as community participation, inadequate marketing, and entrepreneurial skills, lack of financial resources, and heavy dependence on donors' funds, job creations, and tangible benefits from the resources and lands (Sebela, 2010).



Lack of financial support not only affects making good marketing and upgrading materials but also accommodations and services (Dixey, 2005). Lack of knowledge and professionals, elites' domination, lack of stakeholder collaboration, centralization of local administration, cultural differences deficiency of a proper legal system, scarcity of skilled human resources, lack of financial resources is viewed as structural limitations of community participation in tourism (Tosun, 20000). The promotion of tourism becomes a major concentration. Most visitors are looking for authentic experiences from destinations where they can interact with the local people and can explore the local cultures. So the relationship between host-guest is important for the success of CBT. CBT empowers the community members to actively participate in tourism planning, development processes, and implementation at the community level, construction contractors board (CCB) is essential for inclusive community development and a key element for the success of sustainable CBT (Ahmeti, 2013). CBT focuses on the active participation of community members in planning and development processes which maximizes benefits to the local communities and encourages for preserving community resources (Inskeep, 1994). The interaction between local people also important in promoting CBT and hospitality and friendliness of the community is another CBT development that will make visitors satisfied and authenticity of the destinations. The concept of participation is key to community development and gained increased attention in the tourism literature (Telfer, 2003). Community participation is essential to the long



term existence of community based projects (Iazima Majewski & Zmyslony, 2015), and which can enhance benefits to the community and reduce negative impacts (Jama & Getz, 1995).

### **2.3. Methodology and Theoretical Frame**

The community based tourism (CBT) idea was originally formulated in Canada based on the community based development approach (Giampiccoli, 2015; King & Pearlman, 2009; Telfer, 2009). Community based tourism is an alternative type of tourism, such as community based tourism, eco-tourism, ethnic tourism, pro-poor tourism, and rural tourism to remote rural areas (Novelli, 2016). And this has become worldwide spread and an important alternative form of tourism development for many countries such as Thailand, Indonesia, Cambodia, The Caribbean, Europe, and Africa (Amin & Ibrahim, 2015). The community should maintain and manage the CBT development process, and CBT is focused on local empowerment, capacity building, host community involvement in planning and decision making by a grassroots approach of a destination society to create a more sustainable industry (Leksakundilok & Hirsch, 2008; Prachvuthy, 2006). Community based tourism contributes to the three pillars of sustainability through distributing economic, environmental, and social benefits that empower the local communities and builds community capacity to manage their resources (Asker, Boronyak,

Carrad & Paddon, 2010). Community based tourism becomes popular in the mid-1990s, reversing the development as a bottom-up approach to provide full community participation at every level of the development process (Askerm Boronyak, Carrard & Paddon, 2010). The CBT model is formulated as a pathway for the economic development of undeveloped regions (such as poor, impoverished, marginalized people in rural and remote areas (Muganda, 2009; as cited in Ndlovu, 2015). And CBT also should be applied as a device for social participation of the host community in tourism-related activities, building their capacities can anticipate tourism development in their areas where the communities are living (Sutawa, 2012 ). The participation of the community is also a tool for solving tourism-related problems in developing countries (Brohman, 1996). Therefore it is crucial to keep tourism development simply by basing CBT on the existing knowledge systems, the traditional way-of-life and practices, existing community capital, skills, cultural and environmental assets, and attractions so as not to overwhelm (Tasci, Semrad & Yilmaz, 2013). Participation is equated with co-operation and incorporation into pre-determined activities. This is only one stage in the development process, and we must also consider participation in decision making, implementation and maintenance, in benefits, and the evaluation of both successes and failures. In accordance with the definition of community based tourism, which is an alternative type of tourism that includes community participation as the main elements containing important elements, namely as participatory planning, collaboration, and partnership, local management,

empowerment of community members, establishment of environmental, community goals, relief of related parties such as government, funding agencies and the private sector, focus on generating additional income for the community in the long run (Dodds, R et al., 2001). Local community participation is critical for effective, equitable, and legitimate planning, and planning supports building community capacity and the CBT market (Sebele, 2010; Suansri, 2003). According to the studies, the main barriers of community participation were due to decentralization systems, lack of knowledge, power inequalities among the community members and dominance of elite groups, distribution of resources and benefits, and the community should receive a large sum of benefits.

The literature review of this study identified the interrelationship between community based tourism and community development. Community participation is identified as a main pillar and success factor for CBT development, although each CBT project may have different success factors. Based on the current study, it will only focus on the evaluation and analysis of challenges and opportunities for the CBT development in the case of the Myaing CBT project, Myanmar. Community Participation is important in sanitation programs where people may not be accustomed to their surroundings and news sanitation facilities. Because of community participation, people feel a sense of community and recognize the benefits of their involvement. That can motivate people to work together, and people see a genuine opportunity to better their own lives and the community as a whole and be called genuine community participation. According to my

observation, the local community is high participation in leaders and the local community. The government did not participate in financial supporting, but they are given support by promoting CBT in their official media. They reduced restrictions on access and overnight stayed for foreigners. As the government can not provide financial support to CBT development, they can promote CBT projects by connecting with NGOs, INGOs, tour companies, etc. The government thinks the CBT project can help in rural community development. That is why government participation in CBT projects. INGOs' participation is also needed in CBT. Action Aid Myanmar is so skilled in mobilizing the community, so they provided training programs. So local community participation, government participation, and INGOs participation are all perfectly combined in Myaing CBT. According to my observation, that is the primary successful fact of the Myaing CBT project. In this thesis, I want to analyze the genuine participation of local community, government, and INGOs.

### **III. Community Based Tourism in Myanmar**

#### **3.1. Tourism and Development in Myanmar**

Myanmar (Burma), officially the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, is the largest of the mainland South Asia states by area with a size of 676,578 square kilometers. As of the 2017 census, the population is about 54 million. Myanmar (Burma) consists of 14 provinces; or seven states representing seven main ethnic races and seven divisions. Seven races are known as Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Chin, Mon, Rakhine, Shan is the province, and the seven administrative regions are mainly inhabited by Burmese people, including the Sagaing state and the Thanindaryi, Bago, Magwe, Mandalay, Yangon, Ayeyarwady province, etc. All seven states are mountainous, while the divisions are mainly bare areas except for Sagaing, Bago, and Thaninthayi divisions. According to the Myanmar Information Management Unit (MIMU), as of December 2015, there are 67 districts in Myanmar, which are subdivided into townships, then towns, wards, and villages.

Tourism as a world-wide activity has grown extraordinarily over the last 50 years. It has become one of the world's most critical industries for creating job opportunities and

earning foreign revenue (UNDP, 2011). In 2011, Myanmar ended 60 years of isolation. After many years of international boycotts, tourism development in Myanmar has grown rapidly and intensely. International tourists have initiated exploring well-known and unspoiled cultural heritages and natural beauties of the country (Häusler, N & Discheriet, K, 2016; Lisa & Macri, 2017). There are three eras to classify tourism development in Myanmar as the parliamentary democracy (1948-1962), the socialist period (1962-1988), and the opening of tourism markets since the 1990s. During in parliamentary democracy period, capitalism was applied as a country's economic policy. So only very few private travel agencies were opened, and tourist visas were valid for a month. In 1963, visas were valid within 24 hours, and hotels and travel agencies become state-owned to conserve cultural heritages from foreign impacts. In the new military regime around the 1990s, foreign investments began, and tourism development has become an important national economic sector. In 1992, Ministry of Hotels and Tourism (MOHA) was established and followed by the construction of tourism-related infrastructures with the declaration of "Visit Myanmar (Burma) Year" in 1996, the government opened its doors legitimately to the outside world (Info Birmanie, 2011). The tourism industry has become one of the critical economic sectors after the military government reign ended in 2010. It became the government of Myanmar's primary intention for economic growth and poverty reduction.

Most places that are well inside the country are open to foreign tourists. The border areas and Thailand, except for official checkpoints, are not available due to security reasons. Armed groups are operating in some of these areas where the proper road infrastructure is non-existent. Remote places inside the country, where there is no safe transport, are still out of the tourist map. Many off-the-beaten-track places require a special permit and the company of a licensed tour guide. Foreign tourists are free to go to the below areas and the places between them. Please note that this general list was checked in January 2004 and is likely to change without notice. Thaninthayi (by boat and by flight - road travel are restricted), Kayin state (only to and from Pha An the capital and surrounding), Yangon division, Bago division, Ayeyarwaddy division, Mon state (except the border with Thailand - which needs a permit), Kayah state (only to Loi Kaw by boat and car from Shan state, and by flight), Rakhine state (some remote mountain regions and the border with Bangladesh are out of tourist access), Magwe division (western areas close to Rakhine and Chin states may need a guide), Mandalay division (northern parts such as Mogyoke need a permit), Shan state south the Inle circuit, north to the Muse at China border, and east to Tachileik at Thai border - the rest are restricted or only by permit), Chin state (by permit), Sagaing division (lower Chindwin river - the rest are by permit), Kachin state (Myitkyina, Myitsone the confluence of the Ayeyarwaddy, and up to Putao-the rest are by permit).



New Myanmar government tries to reopen in many sectors after Myanmar change to emerge new democratic government policies. Tourism becomes one of the most important fields in the economic sector. The new government is interested in new tourism development projects for local communities. Therefore in these days, Ministry of Hotels and Tourism is fascinating by community based tourism programs and tries to support as much as they can. In Myanmar, tourism has become one of the most important economic drivers. Ministry of Hotels and Tourism (MOHT) is highly involved in community participation in the tourism industry by stating policy on Community Involvement in Tourism (CIT) to promote community participation in tourism enterprises for creating job opportunities for the local communities, especially for rural, poor and marginalized people. The objectives of Community Involvement in Tourism in Myanmar ( 2013, p.13) are strengthening the institutional environment and civil societies, capacity building for community relations activities in tourism, developing safeguards, systems, and procedures to strengthen community planning and management in tourism, encouraging local entrepreneurship through micro and local enterprises, diversity and developing quality products and services at the community level, monitoring positive and adverse impacts of community involvement in tourism existing knowledge systems, the traditional way of life, and practices, existing community capacity, skill, cultural and environment assets and attractions so not to overwhelm (Tasci, Semrad & Yilmaz, 2013).



### **3.2 The Rise of Community Based Tourism for Development in Myanmar**

Tourism can create many possible job opportunities and generate economic development, but it does not equally reduce poverty. Mass tourism's rapid growth also causes various problems and negative impacts on the economy, socio-culture, and the environment. Because of that, the interest in sustainable tourism has grown. Community based tourism and eco-tourism have begun to launch in Myanmar to decrease overcrowding pressure in main tourist destinations such as Bagan, Yangon, Mandalay cities, generate possible job opportunities, and benefit rural communities. Tourism development can lead to having community problems. Still, proper planning can potentially contribute to foster awareness of issues and opportunities, empowering citizens to make decisions, training residents for leadership positions, providing more and better community facilities and services, and facilitating more vital local institutions and feelings of interdependence (Jafari, 2000, p.96). The government encourages CBT to attract more international tourists and improve community involvement in the tourism related business by experiencing locals' lives and interacting with the community. According to the ASEAN CBT standard, the concept of CBT is

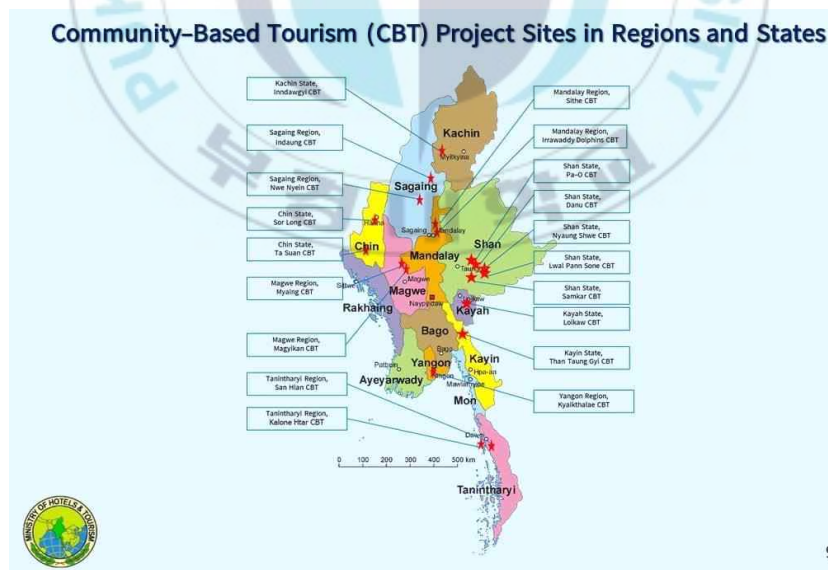
“Community based tourism (CBT) is a form of tourism that seeks to empower communities to manage tourism growth and achieve community aspirations relating to their wellbeing and includes economic, social, and environmentally sustainable development.”

The transition from military dictatorships to a more democratic country led to the implementation of CBT. As a result, tourists became more interested in exploring these new and unspoiled sites. Moreover, CBT was included in the government’s reformed agenda, the 100 days plan. The 100 days plan was set by the National League of Democracy (NLD) to work towards the public’s priorities and conveniences, such as transport infrastructure, telecommunication, and some parts of community development. NLD (National League for Democracy) party declared statement in 2011 that tourism boycott should be lifted and “welcome visitors who keen to promote the welfare of the ordinary people and the conservation of the environment and to acquire an insight into the cultural, political and social life of the country while enjoying happy and fulfilling holidays in Myanmar .” (NLD Statement on October 5th, 2011). In 2012, Myanmar Joined the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

The tourism industry flourished as one of the economic sectors to generate foreign revenues, protecting local traditions, culture, environment, and expansion of employment after the country was emancipated from the military regime in 2010. Since Myanmar is a developing country, tourism is not flourished yet, and tourists are entirely unfamiliar with

this country. The political unrest in the country also impacts the image of the country, subsequently affecting tourism. For startup tourism like CBT, it is harder to get tourists noticed because it is not marketed widely, and there is not sufficient information about CBT villages. The deficiency of human capital is also a challenge for CBT villages because some of the youths in those villages emigrated to neighboring countries to get a well-paid job to support back to their families. Myanmar government wants to encourage community based tourism development because they want to promote rural lives and community involvement in the tourism sector and attract international visitors.

< Picture 1 > Community Based Tourism Project Sites in Myanmar



Source: Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, Myanmar

The main goal of CBT implementation in Myanmar is that the profits gained from tourism will significantly benefit the community's livelihood as an additional income besides farming. Another goal of the CBT program is the reduction of poverty. The community's primary source of income is from agriculture and the emigrants sending money back to their families.

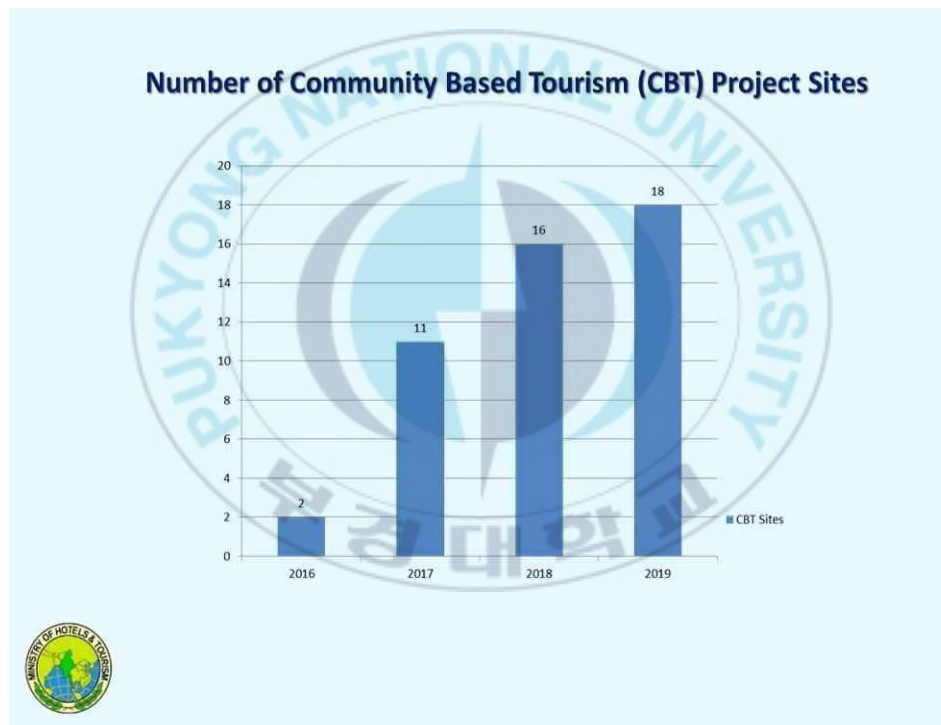
< Picture 2 > Arrivals and Incomes of CBT Sites



Source: Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, Myanmar

Even though there was a lack of infrastructure and sanitation, visitors still enjoy coming to Myanmar CBT villages. Some tourists have difficulties finding information about CBT programs in Myanmar because they cannot find much information on the Internet.

< Picture 3 > Number of Community Based Project Sites



Source: Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, Myanmar

According to the picture, the numbers of community based project site are increased. Myanmar started CBT projects with two sites (one is the Myaing CBT site), and there are

18 CBT sites currently running. Ministry of Hotels and Tourism planned to implement more CBT project sites in Myanmar. They also filmed promotion videos about community based tourism for local tourist marketing.



## **IV. Community Changes After Community Based Tourism in Myanmar**

### **4.1. Brief Introduction of Myaing**

Myaing (Burmese: မြိုင် ) is a town and seat of Myaing Township in the Magway region of central Myanmar. Myaing Township (Burmese: မြိုင်မြို့နယ် ) is a township of Pakokku District in the Magway region of Burma (Myanmar). Its administrative seat is Myaing. The population of Myaing is 225,771 in total. The majority of the population in Myaing Township is Burmese and practice Buddhism. People living across Myaing Township are traditional farmers, and their main livelihood is agriculture. Myaing is a town that far 78km to the north of Bagan and a critical agricultural town in the dry zone. People live on agriculture. They grow the peanuts, sesame, peas, and do the Thanakha plants' gardens (the main natural cosmetic plant for Burmese ladies and its botanical name is *Limonia acidissima*). Myaing is located in the dry zone of Myanmar, so there are always water problems. According to Inn Yaung village chairman interview, for local

farmers, water for irrigation is crucial for producing rice as the rainfall in the region is not enough for agricultural production. Hence, the primary source of water for the farms comes from the dam. He and other villagers want to get help for the Yinn Daing Taung dam implementation project. So they first engaged with Action Aid Myanmar. Action Aid Myanmar intends to help local communities to earn extra income as they have no income after the agricultural season. So Action Aid Myanmar introduced community based tourism program to the community.

#### **4.2. Before and After The CBT Implementation in Myaing**

Myanmar is a rapidly emerging tourism destination in Southeast Asia, with the tourism industry consistently proving itself to be a driver for growth in the country's developing economy. The economic gains from tourism have been significant, but they have not been widespread. Much of the benefit has been concentrated within the current core group of established tourism hubs such as Yangon, Mandalay, Bagan, and Inle Lake. Myaing Township is just a 30-minute drive from Bagan, but none of the burgeoning tourism industry benefits. Job opportunities are limited in Myaing, and severe poverty is common. Most villagers work as farmers and unskilled laborers, and it is common for youth and working-age adult men to migrate to Yangon, Mandalay region of Myanmar, or abroad to Thailand in search of works.



#### **4.2.1 Challenges and Weak Points of Myaing Community Before CBT**

Myaing CBT is the first successful CBT project of Myanmar and well process till now and future. Myaing CBT consists of four villages; East Kangyitaw, West Kangyitaw, Sule pan, and Inn Yaung. These villages are about 15 minutes drive from Myaing Township. Their livelihoods are livestock (cow, chicken, goats), weaving, traditional snacks, crops like sesame, sunflower, pigeon pea, and maize. The villages can enough live during harvest season but year-round income has always struggled. The average daily income in Myaing is 800 - 2,000 Myanmar kyat per day. Community members have often expressed their desire to find a way to benefit from the influx of tourism revenue in nearby Bagan. Action Aid Myanmar engaged with the Myaing local community through the Yinn Daing Taung dam implementation project for the first time. There are over 300 villages in Myaing Township. But only four villages were started this CBT. The reason is, other communities are also ready to accept tourists, but the numbers of tourists were very few then so only four communities can run this CBT. In 2013, They built lodge, and expected agriculture will be very good. After one year of construction, heavy rain comes and damage. There is no remaining water for usage. And next year also no water. There is a serious problem of dry zone area and farmers faced so difficulties in living, difficulty estimate the weather, water problems, etc. In 2013, there was a heavy rain problem, drought problem in 2014, and they did not know what will be in 2015. Then, they started

thinking of plan B. Tourism becomes plan B for them because Myaing township is only 2 hours driving far from Bagan, the tourist attraction place of Myanmar. At that time, there is no community nor rural area that joined the CBT project in Myanmar. Because the government did not allow tourism in the village before. So if possible, they want to do a tourism program in this community. The local villagers want to do tourism but they afraid that “our villages did not have any pagoda to attract tourists. They thought tourists are only interested in ancient pagodas and so on.” Cultural tourism is an influence in the Myanmar tourism field for a long time so most locals think tourists come to Myanmar because they love to see pagoda. So the manager told them that “Do not worry, after they saw pagodas in Bagan, they do not want to see no more pagoda.” Your villages have natural beauty so as long as there is no plastic, there is for tourism. So the manager got agreement from villagers, he went to a tourism forum and did a presentation. There were some difficulties in the persuasion of local tourist agent companies. Because of the previous government’s policy “no tourists are allowed to visit villages.” At that time, only foreign investment travel company “Intrepid Travel Group” was interested to join this project. At first, they planned a day trip program but that is not good ideas so they collaborated with Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, the regional government, Action Aid Myanmar, and the local community to decide to build a lodge for night stay. In January 2016, they started accepted visitors. So before CBT implementation, Myaing community had limited job opportunities, low income, water shortage problem, ignorance of CBT,

and tourism because weak points . Because of these weakpoints, they decided to do Myaing CBT.

#### **4.2.2 Advantages and Opportunities of Myaing Community after CBT**

##### **Implementation**

Myaing CBT initiatives target only foreign visitors. They have a two years exclusive contract with PEAK/ Journey Adventure Tour Agency. Most visitors come with a group that includes 16 people in two groups or three groups. Since 2019, they plan to expand their capacity so there will be more visitors accept in the coming years. After their two-year contract with the PEAK/Journey Adventure Tour Agency, they started marketing with 20 travel agencies. Currently, they built a lodge as the center of four communities. Still, they intended to expand their rooms capacity in villages about 2-3 kilometers far from that and planned to go around by bicycles across the farms. They expect to accept local visitors. As for local visitors, most of them are student group for a field trip.

They currently accept visitors as a group, no less than 2 or 3 people. Accepting local visitors can be more difficult because they know more about rural culture thus demand too much. At first, Action Aid Myanmar intended to make community-university but still need to learn about human capacity, woman leadership, child education, climate changes,

etc. They want to make 3-month programs or yearly programs for community mothers to teach guests from foreign universities to grow rice and to do handicraft-making, etc. But they are now more busy in promoting the CBT project and being focused on tourism, thus they could not have enough time to run community university. Action Aid Myanmar has been doing projects in Myanmar since 2008, so now they want to slow down their budget for projects and to focus on social enterprise. Action Aid is a global justice federation working to achieve social justice, gender equality, and poverty eradication. As for Myanmar, they trained women and youth leaders to help their communities to claim their rights, especially women's rights, land rights, and the right to education. Action Aid Myanmar opened handicraft shop in Bagan to generate more income. Since 2013, they have trained 2000 women to produce local handicraft products. And they also planned to trade agricultural products of dry zones. There is always a water shortage problem in dry zone, so the farmers faced difficulties in agricultural production. Action Aid Myanmar is engaged with the Myaing local community through the Yinn Daing Taung Dam implementation project at the first beginning. Then, later water from the Dam becomes the primary source of water to use for the community. The community has no income after the agricultural season, so young people tend to migrate to foreign countries to find jobs to support their families. Action Aid Myanmar decided to help the community to generate extra income, so they introduced the community based tourism project. The four villages rotate the hosting duties one after another. They are informed of the hosting

duties one day before the visitors arrive at the CBT site. On the CBT site, 55 dollars is charged for one visitor, and it is distributed according to the services provided to the visitors. 10% of that goes to a community fund to spend on community development projects of the villages.

Guests are housed in local-style accommodations adjacent to the villages. During their stays, they have multiple opportunities to experience the area's beautiful ecosystem, to participate in cultural exchanges, and experience village life. The overall goal of the project of Action Aid Myanmar is to establish a tourism destination in Myaing Township that is minimally disruptive to the local environment and existing way of life in local communities. It also intends to increase economic opportunities in a sustainable and community-driven manner, and to benefit the broader community as a whole. The specific objectives of the project are to foster alternative livelihoods opportunities by providing hospitality skills training and employing interested community members, to benefit the wider community by creating a community fund in which a portion of tourism revenues can be used to fund community-wide development projects, and to create a model that can be replicated for use in future community based tourism initiatives throughout Myanmar. In Myaing CBT site, before they get trained, they have many challenges and problems. They are afraid that their daily works will be affected by CBT, since they have zero knowledge about community based tourism, and they thought there are no specific tourist attractions. So they doubted that tourism could be successful in

their community. According to observation, as opportunities of Myaing CBT, the local community clearly understands the CBT concepts and experiences required for CBT development. That opportunity motivates the willingness of the community to participate in CBT activities and development projects. They also raise environmental awareness and knowledge by using natural shampoo and soaps made by site staffs, using bamboo waving products to encourage the community's extra income. Local community is a well understanding of the principles of CBT and basic training and workshops to increase their awareness, knowledge, confidence, and capabilities for promoting CBT project and providing better services to visitors. They are trained for transparency, so there are statistics, fair policies on benefit-sharing, and environmental conservation.

Because of Myaing villagers' enthusiasm to capitalize on the Bagan tourist market, government and private tourism industry stakeholders' desires to expand tourism destinations to new areas, establishing a community based tourism project is a logical and viable avenue for fostering alternative livelihoods in the Myaing area. The operating systems of Myaing CBT were well organized. There are households that interest in doing a CBT project among four villages. So selective members were trained in Action Aid Myanmar (INGO), and they were divided into 4 or 5 group members to do different tasks of CBT project such as cooking, housekeeping, culture shows, guides, and so on. They are rotating their rounds to serve the tourists. The initiative was implicated in 4 villages in Magway: East Kangyi Taw, West Kangyi Taw, Inn Yaung, and Suli Pan. The villages



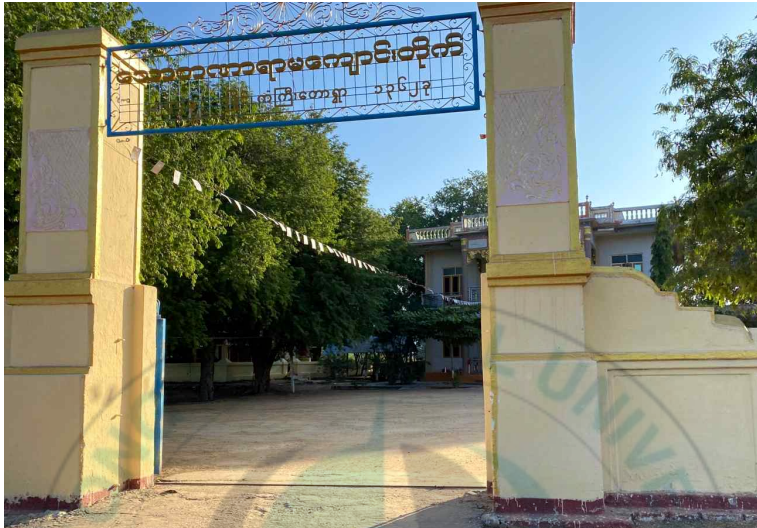
provide a comfortable and convenient stay for tourists. They can cycle around the villages and observe the locals' routines and visit the impressive 170-year-old monastery near the area. CBT members are provided with skill training in which they will be qualified to be guides, handicrafts and weaving experts, and many more. Tourists also get to enjoy taking a ride on the traditional bullock-cart.

< Picture 4 > Middle School



There is middle school and monastery in two villages of Myaing CBT. They cropped raw sunflowers and cleaned to make cooking oil, and other works.

< Picture 5 > Monastery



< Picture 6 > Raw Sunflowers Cropping





Nowadays they start doing the part-time job of the hair cleaning process for human hair wholesale chinese factory raw temple hair to extensions.

< Picture 7 > Hair Cleaning Process Work for Human Hair Whole Sale Factory of China



< Picture 8 > Making Cleaning  
Process for Sunflower Cooking Oil



I met with the community CBT members, and they showed around the village, including middle school, monastery. They are proud and happy to participate in the CBT program. Now they have to worry less about income after harvest season off. The most significant changes in CBT participation are now they get water as they wish, and for electricity, they are waiting to install generator through the agreement with regional government.

< Picture 9 > Local Community Resident House



There are 30 villages around Myaing Township. Approximately 1000 people visit travel agencies within a year. The number of tourists has increased dramatically over the past two years, and residents have not known how to respond to this sudden phenomenon. They have begun to worry about abandoning their farming. The Myaing CBT is currently running four villages. They tested to work with other villages and has failed. The other villages failed because they continued to improve the village infrastructure through development investments and so on. Myaing CBT is a community project managed by women who were trained for three years by Action Aid Myanmar. Action Aid Myanmar

supports this special technical training such as how to respond to tourists, to organize meals to be served to tourists, and to manage program schedules.

In Myaing CBT, visitors can enjoy as

- 1) observing the villagers' livelihoods activities
- 2) trekking in the village, making traditional snacks, and learning weaving
- 3) study tours for researchers and students
- 4) discussion in the situation of the development of the village
- 5) visiting around the village by riding a bicycle
- 6) planting in the areas of cultivation
- 7) sometimes, participating in national ceremony
- 8) painting Thanakkha (traditional sun cream/ makeup) on the face
- 9) local transportation as bullock cart.



< Picture 10 > Local Pickup Peanuts



According to an interview with Aung Min Naing (Manager of Myaing CBT),

*“Community tour” လုပ်တဲ့အခါ သူတို့ကို မုန့်ဖိုးမပေးဖို့ tourists တွေကို တားမြစ်ထားပါတယ်။ ပြီးတော့ ဝင်ငွေရရှိမှုမှတ်တမ်း၊ ပရိုဂရမ်လုပ်ဆောင်ချက်တွေနဲ့ ပတ်သက်ပြီး လအလိုက်မှတ်တမ်းဒေတာတွေ လုပ်ထားပါတယ်။ ဒါမှသာ ကျွန်တော်တို့ကြားက ယုံကြည်မှုတိုးတက်စေမှာ ဖြစ်တာကြောင့်ပါ။ တစ်နှစ်ကို tourists အယောက်နှစ်ထောင်အပြင် ပိုလက်မခံဖို့ စီစဉ်သက်မှတ်ထားပါတယ်ဗျ။ ဘာဖြစ်လို့လဲဆိုတော့ tourists အယောက်နှစ်ထောင်ထပ်ပိုလာရင် ရွာခံတွေအနေနဲ့ သူတို့ရဲ့ပင်မအလုပ်အကိုင်ထက် ဝင်ငွေပိုရတယ်ဆိုပြီး အလုပ်တွေ ပစ်ကုန်မှာ စိုးရိမ်တာကြောင့်ပါ။ ”*

*“To avoid giving them money, we banned tourists from giving tips when they are on a community tour; and we will publish all CBT data, including informing the program’s performance every quarter; and in particular transparent of revenue history. This process has helped us improve our credibility. We also designated that more than 2000 tourists a year will never receive because if more than 2000 tourists come, they will lose their business by realizing that they will be profitable beyond their main business.”*

*- A conversation with U Aung Min Naing.*

Community development is a process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems. According to observation and interviews, Because of the CBT project, the local community can generate extra income, trained in knowledge and awareness of CBT, women’s leadership and empowerment, and their eagerness to participate in CBT. Community development is

a grassroots process by which communities: become more responsible, organize and plan together, develop healthy lifestyle options, empower themselves, reduce poverty and suffering, create employment and economic opportunities, achieve social, economic, cultural, and environmental goals. As for community development in Myaing CBT, I mainly focus on community participation, because this is a key to the development of community. Community participation includes local people's service to the visitors, the involvement of local people in meetings for CBT development, community members' options in the decision-making process, and whether local people are informed or not in the CBT development process. There are ten community members in one village of CBT. Most CBT community participators are women. The four villages participated in CBT programs by rotation. They participated in cooking for visitors, explaining, and discussions with visitors. When significant decisions for tourism development in the community were made, community members are informed and participated.

#### **4.3. CBT Impacts in Economy, Socio-culture and Environment**

This study focuses on community participation in the CBT project. Community participation includes services and products provided by local people to the visitors, the involvement of local people in meetings for CBT development, voices and opinions of community members in decision-making processes, and whether local people are

informed or not when it comes to CBT development. CBT projects also can impact in economical, socio-culture, and environmental. Community participation refers to the local people's involvement in tourism development by services providing to visitors, how many attending meetings about development and progress in the program, their participation in decision-making processes in term of their ideas, and perspectives for the CBT project. From my interview and observation, everyone in the community knows the CBT project, and most are willing to participate in the project. In Myanmar's traditional culture, women follow the head of household, a husband. But now, because of the CBT project, women participate in the decision-making process and they can freely express their own opinions. Women participating in community activities, they become the leader and are called as mom. The lack of human resources in operating CBT programs and product development, handling and guiding visitors, providing tourism services, etc. are also significant constraints in developing CBT projects (Dixey, 2005, Vietnam CBT Handbook, 2013).

#### **4.3.1 CBT Impacts in Economy**

Community participation in the CBT project can impact in economic, environmental, and social aspect. In the past, Myaing region is in the dry zone area, and most of people are farmers and daily part-time workers in farming. So, they have only five months to work and low income and job opportunities. But now, they can work for the whole year



and to increase income and job opportunities. The economic impacts of the CBT project are increased household income and more job opportunities, thus young generations can earn additional income by doing tourism-related jobs. And participating community members can have better well-being.

CBT project can create job opportunities and increase income. They had only five months to work in the past, but now they can work the entire year and get income. Now, foreign tourists prefer CBT-like tourism rather than a simple sightseeing. Besides, since the environment is a global issue, CBT tourism is better for the environment than regular city sightseeing. Foreigners usually come for sightseeing in winter. In Myanmar, agriculture is not profitable in winter because it is dry. So when winter comes, they focus on CBT and are engaged in agriculture during the summer. So household income has increased because of CBT. Women can earn additional income for participation in CBT. CBT program creates many new jobs in the community.

#### **4.3.2 CBT Impacts in Socio-culture**

Myaing CBT participants decided to participate in CBT because they want to improve the impact of socio-culture on the Myaing community. There are CBT impacts in Myaing. Local roads in villages have been developed to a good condition. Before implementing CBT, villages used batteries for electrical power usage, but now they can have a chance to access electricity power by the improvement of the regional government. There is

fewer needs for people to sell their land. Because of the CBT project, immigrants numbers increased. The number of emigrants also decreased. The health care system improved, and education standards were also enhanced. The water supply system has been improved because of CBT and can reduce the dry season's drought problem. They have a plan to open an English language learning program for children. And because of the CBT program, healthcare becomes a priority for the community, and now both visitors and community members can access a clinic. U Aung Min Naing (CBT Project Manager) and Action Aid Myanmar staffs explained community based tourism programs and why community members should participate in that projects. After a few times of their explanations, community members came to have trust in them and decided to participate. Action Aid Myanmar selected leaders of each village. They had a training program in their head office to train people and to run the project. The most change after participation in CBT project is good in transportation, especially roads in villages. Local communities participated in Myaing CBT to build a water storage tank and to access to the electric power distribution network. Now because of the Myaing CBT project, the regional government approved to generate electrical power. The community members built a water storage tank with the yearly profits gained by participating in the CBT project. The field staffs also checked and observed the communities everytimes, so whenever they came, community members needed to give time to them for a survey. That could affect their daily working hours. Whenever there had meetings and discussion,

committee members were mostly asked questions and were involved in the decision making process. So, according to this, community members participated in the CBT running and development process. To achieve the CBT project's success, there needed training, community participation in the decision-making process, high willingness and strong community participation, the hospitality of host communities, neat and tidy accommodation, and the awareness of the CBT progress. There are the critical success of the Myaing CBT project among Myanmar CBT implementation projects. In the Myaing CBT site, there are permanent staff members and community members from four villages work in round turn for services. They help staff members in cooking, cleaning, other housekeeping works. According to the interview with them, participation in the CBT project could enable them to get better opportunities such as water storage tanks, libraries, and access to electricity. They can also empowerment our available skills. These are the social-cultural impacts on the CBT site.

#### **4.3.3 CBT Impacts in Environment**

Because of community participation in CBT, there were also impacts on the environment. Villagers are educated for the plastic free zone and be aware of environmental and climate change. They also have a plastic free zone. Because of the CBT project, they learn waste system management, and they developed by using handmade bamboo waving products. Most are made by bamboo waving products in CBT

sites such as accommodation, waste bins, bamboo chairs, bamboo cover for the plate, cup, etc. As CBT activities, there are planting one tree per visitor. That aims to raise awareness for environmental and natural disaster risk reduction and reduce deforestation.

And specialties of Myaing CBT are no MSG in cooking, fresh seasonal fruits because they get them from planting trees activities, using handmade bamboo waving products made by local communities, using natural shampoo and soaps by CBT site manager.



< Picture 11 > Bamboo Waste Bins, Bamboo Chair, Plastic Free Zone in CBT



The most important things in providing services in the CBT project are the hospitality of the host community, cleanness in foods and accommodations, and a plastic free zone. Visitors dislike plastic waste, so community members need to be careful. Among the good points for staffs in CBT sites, even mother who has to toddle baby can work in CBT site. That means a lot to our traditional society. Their living standard upgrade, for

example, Ma Su was worked as goats watcher now she works as staff in CBT site, she has better well-being.

U Aung Min Naing, manager of Myaing CBT, explained the general objectives and specific CBT implementation in Myaing. Myaing area is in the dry zone region, water shortage, lack of electricity, and income shortage. So Sule Pan leaders tried ways to solve these problems. He discussed these problems with the regional government officials. So they approved to built dam in there. Yinn Daing Taung dam's implementation project begun with the engagement of Action Aid Myanmar. At the same time, they were building the dam, communities experienced in lack of funds and other problems. At that time, women in communities have participated. Since then, Action Aid Myanmar has observed in local communities to help in their situations solving. A few years ago, dam also shortage of water in the summer season. So Action Aid Myanmar suggested CBT project to communities to resolve the water problem, increase income, and earn extra income and communities fund for community. At first, local communities lack knowledge and awareness about tourism and lack confidence in their capacity, so they lack interest in participating in CBT implementation. Action Aid Myanmar's persistence explained to communities about the challenges and opportunities of CBT implementation in Myaing. Four villages participated in the CBT project of Myaing as the very first CBT implementation in Myanmar. Action Aid Myanmar has done in Myaing CBT management first because local community members could not handle CBT running. But



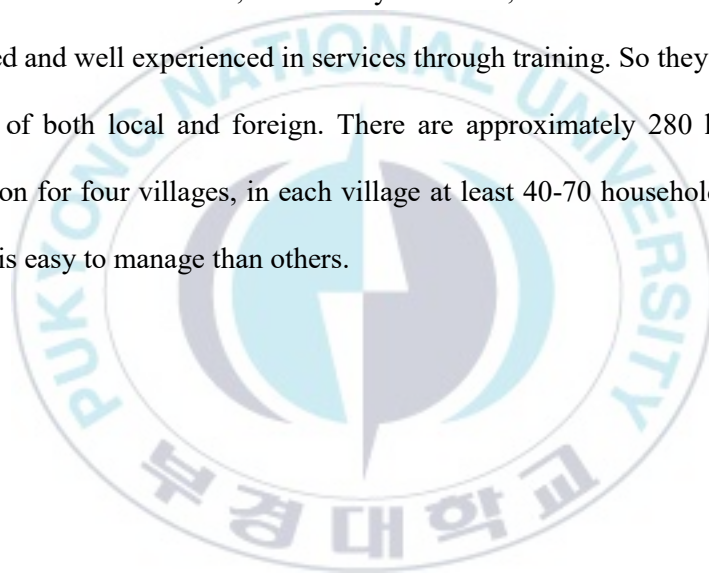
later, they planned to transfer the entire management of the Myaing CBT project to communities members. Myaing CBT project emerged in Myaing because of water shortage, supporting rural farmers to get an extra income after their harvesting period, and encouraging women's empowerment in that region.

< Picture 12 > Local Community Getting Water at Part of Yinn Daing Taung Dam



When you go to the Myaing CBT site, you can see the signboard Yinn Daing Taung dam. So Myaing communities known Myaing CBT as Yinn Daing Taung dam hotel. In Myanmar, homestay service is not officially approved in the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism's legal and regulations. So if you want to stay a night at communities, you need the regional government approval. As for Myaing CBT, the Ministry of Magwe Regional

Government favored CBT project implementation in rural communities development. That is why Myaing CBT has 3 nights program. Myaing has no specific tourism attractions nor tourism experiences. So they decided to promote handmade bamboo waving products to attract nature lovers and tourists. At first, Myaing CBT marketing plan was focused only on foreigners' visits. Their package prices seem a little bit expensive for local tourists. Now, community members, committee members, and staff are well trained and well experienced in services through training. So they eager to accept more visitors of both local and foreign. There are approximately 280 households and 1600 population for four villages, in each village at least 40-70 households. That is why that CBT site is easy to manage than others.





There is no signboard for Myaing CBT. CBT site Manager explained that

“ ကျွန်တော်တို့က ဟိုတယ်ပုံစံ မဖြစ်စေချင်တာကြောင့်ပါ။ ရွာပုံစံလေးအတိုင်း ဖြစ်စေချင်  
တာကြောင့် ဆိုင်းဘုတ် တမင် မထောင်ထားတာပါ။ ပြီးတော့ စလုပ်တဲ့နှစ်မှာ ခရီးသည်တွေ အများ  
ကြီး လာကြမှာစိုးရိမ်တာကြောင့်လည်း ပါပါတယ်။ စလုပ်တဲ့နှစ်မှာ ခရီးသည်တွေ အများကြီး လက်ခံ  
နိုင်ပါ့မလားဆိုပြီး တွေးမိတာကြောင့်ပါ။ ”

*“Because we do not want to look like a hotel. We completely want to be  
a village-style, so there is no signboard. Another reason is, we still did not  
want any visitor to come in the first running year cause this community  
capacity is still questionable to accept many visitors at that time.”*

*- A conversation with U Aung Min Naing.*

CBT focuses on the active participation of community members in planning and development processes, which maximizes benefits to the local communities (not to outsiders) and encourages preserving community resources (Inskeep, 1994). So community members' experiences become a significant concentration in the promotion of tourism. Most visitors seek authentic experiences where they can interact with the local community and explore the local culture. That is why community participation is critical for the success of CBT implementation. The operation of CBT in the local community can improve the knowledge and capacity of the local community, increases awareness of the local people for conservation of natural resources at local and national levels, and

help the community members to understand the relationship between the environment and sustainable economic development in a more profound way. CBT also distributes income directly to the local community by participating in tourism activities and indirectly as social well-being and community development. Lack of knowledge and awareness (such as no interest in CBT projects, challenging to understand CBT concepts), lack of capacity and human resource (such as inadequate training, technical and operational capacity, and poor marketing), poor infrastructure development (poor transportation, long journey, safety and security issues), inadequate fund and budget (limited tourism activities, poor accommodation, and services), low quality of CBT products and services (high price and poor services, sanitation and quality of food), and lack transparent and legal policies & legislation (no statistic documents, no guidelines on benefit-sharing, environment conservation, etc.) are challenges of the CBT projects implementing in Myanmar. But, surprisingly, these become the opportunities for the Myaing CBT project. In the local community in Myaing CBT, they are eager to participate in CBT. Because of well training and workshops, they have professional skills. They have high skills in hospitality as a host community and can give satisfaction and friendliness to visitors. They have a high willingness and strong community participation. So they have positive attitudes to CBT, they also can voice their decisions. They have essential infrastructure development, such as a good transportation system, electricity, water supply, healthcare facilities, and education. They are well prepared in

accommodation and services, so their prices and services, sanitation, and food quality can be satisfactory to visitors. They also trained for transparency, so there are statistics, fair policies on benefit-sharing, and environmental conservation. The local community understands the principles of CBT and gets basic training and workshops to increase their awareness, knowledge, confidence, and capabilities for promoting CBT projects and providing better services to visitors. A clear understanding of the CBT concept and experiences is required for CBT development that will motivate the community to participate in CBT activities and community development projects. All the local community members are happy and excited about the visitors' visits. There is no conflict, misunderstanding, and uncomfortable over the locals and visitors. Without the local community's willingness to participate and support, it will not be possible to develop the tourism industry, especially in community based projects. During the field observation, it can be observed that community members have positive attitudes to CBT. They are so hospitable to the visitors and happy and satisfied with visitors' interactions. They easily showed their enthusiasm, motivations, and feelings to be eager to participate in CBT projects. They are also highly expected from the CBT project for their economic development to high their living standard and community development through their participation in CBT activities and projects. In the CBT project, women and young people also can participate in accommodation services, cultural performances, etc. So the local community can earn extra personal income directly from CBT activities and

community funds as indirectly. Infrastructure development is also needed in CBT development. The regional government should enhance better accessibility to the sites. CBT will not be developed without infrastructure development, and even there are varieties of natural and cultural resources.

The regional government also supports marketing such as advertisement video on-air in government channel, knowledge, and community based tourism awareness. Ministry of Hotels and Tourism and the regional government supported the CBT project for rural socio-economic developments. CBT projects are based on the local resources and capacity of the community members. CBT development can also identify the operational challenges and opportunities for the CBT development while implementing CBT through collaborative work with local community, the regional government, and travel companies.

## **V. Critical Factors on Successful Community**

### **Development in Myaing**

#### **5.1. Participation of Community People, Not Only Leaders**

Community based tourism development would seek to strengthen institutions designed to enhance local participation and promote the popular majority's economic, social, and cultural well-being. It would also seek to strike a balanced and harmonious approach to development that would stress considerations such as the compatibility of various forms of tourism with other components of the local economy, the quality of development, both culturally and environmentally, and the divergent needs, interests and the potentials of the community and its inhabitants (Brohman, 1996, p.60). The general objective of CBT is to promote the local community's socio-economic benefits and promote as a tourist selected destination. The government has hope of benefits to encounter through CBT development. As a benefit to developing socio-economic development through the community such as in decision making and in discussions, they can also improve their capacities and income. The successful CBT projects include empowerment of community capacity,

knowledge and awareness of tourism development, awareness of environmental impacts, collective benefits used in the whole community, improvement in education standard, improvement in standard of living.

The locals believed that CBT would improve their livelihoods and create job opportunities and revenues. However, governmental policies (restrictive business ownership) remained unclear for obtaining permission. The level of community participation is generally low, and some of the local members viewed tourism as seasonal opportunities for employment; they prefer to remain busy with their daily work, so they do not want to participate in the tourism business (Gabito, 2013; Kim Park & Phandonouvong, 2014). In Myaing CBT, community members are willing to participate in tourism in tourism, and they also believe that tourism could benefit from the improvement of their livelihood. Community participation means services and products provided by local people to the visitors, the involvement of local people in meetings for CBT development, voice and opinions of community members in decision-making processes, and whether local people are informed or not when it comes to CBT development. Now local communities have sufficient capacity to implement the CBT project by themselves. At first, they have a lack of skills and capacities to run the CBT project. But now they have enough experiences and capabilities to run themselves. When CBT started to run in Myaing, the local community lack of capital, knowledge, infrastructure for tourism. Deficiency of knowledge and tourism is a new and challenging

concept for a rural community. But they had workshops and training from Action Aid Myanmar. Community members attending meetings and they voice out their decisions, and participate in the decision-making process. When Action Aid Myanmar persuaded the local community to participate in the CBT project, they need to make practical, fair deals. They did over 20 times meetings with the local community to convince them to participate in CBT. After that, they need to find travel companies to get visitors. Local community members have proper training programs, so they have sufficient awareness about tourism, community based tourism systems, etc. Local community members are satisfied with tourism participation because they can benefit social well-being by developing basic infrastructures such as water, electricity, telecommunication, and transportation networks. The regional government also fulfilled its plan of rural development through CBT projects. Tour agencies can get service charges by finding visitors for CBT. So there is a win-win situation for all of them.

When visitors come, two mother leaders and two girls from two villages serve, and two girls from the other two villages are cooking. So all four villages are running the CBT project. All community members' participation in the successful central fact of Myaing CBT. According to CBT site Manager U Aung Min Naing, “While running CBT project, we need to have practical, fair deals with community members. They need to participate in the discussion, decision making, etc. for community development.” CBT allows the local community’s empowerment by generating their knowledge, skills, and



self-confidence to promote their community. Local communities try to improve the healthcare facilities in their villages from the community fund collected from CBT benefits, and they also use benefits for building schools and libraries, etc. The local community wants to have better healthcare facilities for them and visitors. They also want to have a better education system. Before CBT implementing, children of the community went to the school of Myaing township on foot or by bicycle. That was so much troublesome and dangerous in the rainy season. Now they built a middle school in Sule Pan and Kangyi Taw villages with the community fund. The knowledge of health and education of the local community will improve with enhancing those fundamental infrastructure developments. And not only infrastructure development, but CBT can also a strategy for poverty alleviation, income generators, and improving their living standard for a better life. The local community also want to support their long term economic development of the community and infrastructure development in term of electricity, educational development such as construction for school, libraries, healthcare facilities, etc.

“CBT မှာပါရတဲ့အကြောင်းကတော့ ရွာအတွက် ဝင်ငွေရတာကြောင့်ပါ။ အခုဆိုရင် ရွာမှာ  
ရေတိုင်ကီစင် ဆောက်ပြီးပြီ။ ကလေးတွေကျောင်းအတွက်လည်း ဆရာဆရာမတွေကို လစာပေးနိုင်ပြီ။  
စီးပွားရေး အဆင်ပြေတော့ အိမ်မြေကွက်တွေ မရောင်းရတော့ဘူး။ သားသမီးတွေ အိမ်ထောင်ကျတဲ့အ  
ခါ အမွေခွဲပေးလိုက်ရုံပဲ။ ညှော်သည်တွေလာရင် အရမ်းပျော်တယ်။ များများလာစေချင်တယ်။”



*“We participated CBT project because we can get extra income that we can use as a community fund. Now we built a water tank with our fund. We can pay a salary to volunteer teachers. Now we have a stable income to give our little extra land to our married daughter/ son as an inheritance. We are happy when visitors come. We hope to accept more.”*

*- A conversation with a community member, Daw Aye.*

According to observed, the Myaing CBT project implemented the bottom-up or grassroots approach as the government and other stakeholders could not run and manage CBT without the agreement and high participation of the local community. The majority of decisions are made by the community members and most participants of CBT community members. High participation of the local community was found in Myaing CBT. CBT could be one of the sustainable entrepreneurs for community development, such as improving their livelihoods, the great business opportunities, and job-generating for young and women, greater social cohesion through participation in CBT activities and projects. The hospitality of the host community, high willingness and strong community participation in the CBT project, basic infrastructure development, proper training, the improvement of knowledge and capacities of the community are success factors of the Myaing CBT project, and that will be support for the growth and sustainability of CBT project.

Community participation is vital in sanitation programs where people may not be accustomed to their surroundings and new sanitation facilities. The community can take part in activities such as expressing their opinions about their wants, their goals, their desirable improvements, mobilizing as raising awareness in a community needs, establishing organizational structures within the community, participating in formal and informal training activities to enhance communication, maintenance, construction, and financial management skills. Because of community participation, people feel a sense of community and recognize the benefits of their involvement. That can motivate people to work together. People see a genuine opportunity to better their own lives and the community as a whole and be called Genuine community participation. According to my observation, people are willing and ready to participate. Because in Myaing CBT, they treat people with respect, listening to their thoughts, and learning from them will go a long way toward building a successful project. Community participation can contribute to the effectiveness and efficiency of a project; the crucial factor in its success is the manager and staff's attitude in the field. If the staff does not treat people with respect or are seen to favor particular individuals or groups within a community, this can have a highly destructive effect on participation.

Among currently implementation CBT sites, I want to compare Myaing CBT, Ayarwaddy Dolphin CBT, Tamarind Lake Villages Homes, Chin CBT projects (Taisun CBT village, Solong CBT village. The Department of Fisheries manages the dolphin

CBT project with the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) with the primary objective of reducing threats to freshwater dolphin conservation in 2002. CBT site in Ayarwaddy Dolphin Protected Area (ADPA) was started around at the end of 2016 and 2017. The main attraction is cooperation fishing that means a unique way of fishing made by the communication of dolphins and the fishermen. That CBT implementation because they need funds for protection in dolphins. So they are not much focusing on tourism at first. Most villagers are lack awareness and knowledge related to how to preserve natural resources. The government also lacked to promote knowledge and awareness to people. Therefore community participation is weak in that CBT. Some use electrofishing that endangering dolphin. Lack of awareness leads to less interested in participating. So the government needs to raise awareness to protect dolphin and cooperative fishing. If that CBT gets stable visitors, there can generate income for cooperative fishers and their families and raise awareness to protect dolphin and cooperative fishing.

Tamarind Lake Village Homes is for exploring the countryside around Bagan and experience the village lifestyle. You can get a homestay feeling in that CBT site. But, there is also a lack of awareness about CBT and tourism concepts. Local members did not have their own decisions. They only did according to their village head's order. So there is also a lack of community participation and infrastructure. Even though they get training from the Myaing CBT manager, less interest in participating in the community leads to that CBT's failure. In my opinion, they should only focus on the local market.

They can give service to local visitors as village life experience. Lack of knowledge and awareness, lack of community capacity, poor infrastructure development, inadequate fund and budget, lack of transparent and legal policies, poor quality of CBT services are the challenges for CBT development in that Chin CBT sites. The government also should help to promote the unique cultures and heritages of Chin ethnicity. High willingness and strong community participation in CBT, the hospitality of the host community, basic infrastructure development were observed as the opportunities for developing Myaing CBT. Training, raise of knowledge and awareness of community, improvement of community' capacity, and infrastructure development are primarily necessary for the growth and sustainability of CBT projects. These should be provided either by the government, INGOs, tour operators, etc.

## **5.2 The Involvement of Government in CBT**

CBT development supports rural development by generating funds for the community, especially those living in a rural area where services and facilities are limited and inadequate. CBT is a form of sustainable tourism development and identified four components of CBT; economic growth, environmental sustainability, sharing costs, and equally good government interests. The government did not participate in financial

supporting, but they are given support by promoting CBT in their official media. They reduced restrictions on access and overnight stayed for foreigners.

As a government, they can not provide financial support for CBT development, but they can promote CBT projects by connecting with NGOs, INGOs, tour companies, etc. It can also help in marketing by promoting through Government social media sites, broadcasting, holding tourism events, and trade fairs. Myaing CBT is the first CBT project in Myanmar and is currently successfully running the project. So there can have hope for community development through the CBT project. The government thinks the CBT project can help in rural community development. So the government has enthusiasm in the CBT project. The regional government and Ministry of Hotels and Tourism support the legal agreement and borrow the land. Ministry of Hotels and Tourism (MOHT) will resume tourism business operations with Covid-19 prevention measures in place and under the Myanmar Tourism Strategic Recovery Roadmap, which was written at the national level with international experts. The roadmap aims for a full recovery of Myanmar's tourism industry by 2024. They plan that standard operating procedures will be adapted for safe traveling in new normal. Tourist arrivals declined by 75 percent compared to 2019, and revenues from tourism-related industry also declined by 81 percent. They also started working to develop community based tourism and eco-tourism, aiming to create a tourist site after the Covid-19 period. They started new destinations of the ethnic region for community based tourism and promoted in a national

TV broadcast. Ministry of Hotels and Tourism also promoting CBT in their official social media for public awareness. They focus on local tourists for the post-Covid-19 period. As for Myaing CBT, they had new training for operations with Covid-19 prevention measures in place. They also get training programs such as basic english language learning, basic computer usage program. Action Aid Myanmar trained the community members to host the visitors, and community members actively participate so the CBT project can run smoothly. CBT support poverty alleviation, cultural and natural resources conservation through a grassroots level of community participation. CBT also empowers the local community and transforming traditional agricultural farming land for tourist activities. The regional government's understanding, acknowledgment, and support are essential for CBT development. The government should strongly support basic infrastructure sectors such as transportation systems, and healthcare facilities. The regional government is one of the most critical participants in CBT, and they should launch standards, regulations, and policies to develop CBT. They should implement short-term and long-term project planning for CBT development.

### **5.3 The Support of INGOs; Action Aid Myanmar**

INGO's participation is also needed in CBT. For example, Action Aid Myanmar is so skilled in mobilizing the community. And they provided training programs so local



community members can host the visitors. Action Aid is a global justice federation working to achieve social justice, gender equality, and poverty eradication. In Myanmar, they train women and youth leaders to help their communities claim their rights, especially women's rights, land rights, and education. Action Aid Myanmar also wants to focus on social enterprise. CBT project and handicraft shop opened in Bagan are their income sources. Since 2013, they have trained 2000 women to produce local handicraft products and plan to trade agricultural products for dry zones.

CBT site Manager, U Aung Min Naing, is a dry zone area leader in Action Aid Myanmar. When Action Aid Myanmar firstly engaged with the local community through the Yin Daing Taung dam implementation project, he participated as a communicator between Action Aid Myanmar and the local community. Currently, he is working as a manager in the Myaing CBT project. Action Aid Myanmar engaged with the dam project, so they also wanted to help the local community to generate extra income. That was the reason Action Aid Myanmar decided to initiate community based tourism for the Myaing community. They can be the success of Myaing CBT. From my point of view, local community members are active participants in the project. They are enthusiastic about hosting and about promoting their villages. And they had proper training by Action Aid Myanmar. That may be the facts that lead to the success of Myaing CBT. Action Aid Myanmar trained the local community members so they can give their best to visitors.

CBT project is owned, managed, and run by the community. They participate in discussion and decision making. They can voice their views.

There will be an impact economically on CBT implementation in Myaing communities. CBT project creates jobs in tourism so they can get an extra income. The young generation can earn additional income from doing tourism-related jobs. Many new jobs created in the community. Their job opportunities and income are increased. In Myaing, most are farmers, so they have income only in the harvest season, but now they can get an extra income. There will be environmental impacts in CBT implementation in Myaing communities. They have the sense to make a plastic-free zone to attract visitors to Myaing CBT. So they increase their awareness of natural resources and waste system management. And as visitors activity, they plant a tree to raise awareness for environmental conservation. CBT promotes environmental responsibility for the community. There will be an impact on society in CBT implementation in Myaing communities. They built a water tank with a community fund. Local roads have been developed in good condition and can get electricity to facilitate the CBT project. The water supply system improved and can reduce the drought problem in the summer season. They built middle school and library, so they have improved in education standards. The healthcare system is also given a priority for the community. The young generation can improve their language skills by communicating with foreign visitors. Because of the CBT project, the community members' standard of living raising. There will be an impact

in rural culture in CBT implementation in Myaing communities. CBT projects can help to preserve rural culture, traditions, and customs. Local community members change their way of life by CBT. They can get new knowledge and experiences from foreign visitors. The traditional rural culture was nearly fading away, but now because of CBT, they come alive and able to promote to the visitors. CBT encourages to respect the different cultures. And it can also embed in local cultural development. While running the CBT project, they need to have practical, fair deals with community members. They need to participate in the discussion, decision making, etc. for community development. Plans to extend CBT project marketing; currently, they expand the capacities to accept more visitors. There will be an english language program and a basic computer program for the young generation.

At first, community members participate in CBT because they can get extra income, including the summer season. They also built a water tank with the profit they get from the CBT project, so now they have a water supply system. The regional government also planned to generate electricity for the community. Roads also developed in good condition. Healthcare and education are also getting better. In the past, local community members lack basic knowledge and awareness about tourism and challenging to understand the concept of community based tourism. So they were scared to, but later, Action Aid Myanmar field staff explained their training programs, objectives, and concept about community development through community based tourism project.

Based on the interview, CBT development in Myaing with proper planning, a high level of community participation, and generating community capacity can benefit community development. According to research, they overcome the challenges in CBT's successful development by the sufficiency of skilled human capacities, high awareness, and understanding of visitors' needs, wants, and demands. The community has more job opportunities, extra income, and additional income from selling local handicraft products. The well-being of the community members is the primary outcome of running the CBT project. CBT benefits the local people in the rural area. Even though there were no compromising attractions in that region, CBT can benefit the local economy, environment, and society through community members' participation. Myaing CBT was initiated to support rural farmers and to help them to generate extra income after their harvesting season. The job opportunities and income are increased because now they can work for the entire year. As a traditional culture, women did not participate in decision-making and left behind in community development projects in the past. But now they become independent, have the self-esteem to run their businesses, and participated in decision making for the community development projects. And their opinions, leadership, and cooperation are highly appreciated. CBT increases awareness of natural resources among community members. No plastic zone is to be found in the community. To raise awareness for environmental conservation, visitors are encouraged to plant a tree per

visitor. That can also create a sense of love and care for natural resources and the environment. Also, it can reduce deforestation.



## **VI. Conclusion**

The findings from above have highlighted the community's participation in Myaing as well as in the economic, social impacts of CBT on the community. At first, Action Aid Myanmar managed in Myaing CBT initiatives, and the community members are not yet ready and low capacity to handle communication with the tour agency. Still, now it is said that the entire management will be transferred to the community. A participatory approach or so-called “bottom-up” method fits in the case of Myaing CBT initiatives to promote community participation at the grassroots, equality, and empowerment for community members. The successful and profitable points of the Myaing CBT project are; firstly, four villages of Myaing CBT are well organized and well trained. Secondly, there can be women's empowerment to improve in the community because of CBT. Women in the community have an enthusiasm to communicate with visitors. That is rare in Myanmar community culture. According to the observation, the third success fact of Myaing CBT, they have good infrastructure development, substantial financial support and fund, the training for the capability of services and quality of products, proper transparent, legal plans and policies, the hospitality of host communities, high willingness and strong community participation to CBT project. Especially in the community based tourism project, it will not be possible to develop the tourism industry



without the local community's willingness, support, and participation. Because CBT projects are founded in the community resources and people. During the field observation, the researcher observed that the community members have positive attitudes to CBT as a fact of success. They are hospitable to the visitors and have a comfortable and satisfying interaction with visitors. They pointed out and expressed their enthusiasm, motivations, their feelings on how much they want to participate in the CBT project. These made Myaing CBT project successful among CBT projects in Myanmar. As a weak point, the promotion and introduction of CBT programs in Myanmar are doing by self. That's the weak point of the Myanmar tourism system. Self-promotion is not as effective as much as it should be. As challenges for CBT, there are lack of essential infrastructure for tourism products and services, inadequate infrastructure development, lack of skills, capacity, training for staffs and communities, low level of community participation, heavy dependence on donor fund, lack of proper planning, incompatibility of policies and legislations, inadequate marketing, lack of accountability, weak cooperation between stakeholders, and inequitable sharing of benefits. Tourism is a seasonal business with low income, which can also be a challenge for the local community. The lack and inadequate of these factors may be challenges of CBT projects. These factors play a prominent role in CBT development. The combination of opportunities and success factors can lead to further development and the growth of CBT. The challenges of CBT could overcome

through community participation, the government supporting participation, professional training in planning processes.

For the sustainable development in CBT, firstly, Ministry of Hotels and Tourism should provide awareness about CBT information regarding the advantages and disadvantages of CBT to increase and willingness of the community. Secondly, they should also help in marketing about CBT projects in Myanmar. Thirdly, for CBT's growth and sustainability, the local community should maintain its strong points and the more collaboration program with the regional government and the local community. Lack of experience to mobilize the community is the fact of failure for CBT projects implementing in Myanmar. Most only know how to run restaurants, hotels system. Without the community's strong involvement, it does not make sense to call as community based tourism. Only Myaing CBT is successful in the community, actively involved. Other CBT projects were failed because they are much more like a hotel based system.

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