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## The role of native people in the development of Chaung Tha Beach Resort, Patheingyi Township

Aung Kyaw<sup>1</sup>, Cho Mar Oo<sup>2</sup>, Yee Yee Than<sup>3</sup> and Htay Htay Naing<sup>4</sup>

### Abstract

Native people play an important role in the initial development of a resort. During the development process, however, the role of these peoples gradually minimizes and shifts to the marginal jobs with the participation of outside capitals. This paper analyzed this process from a case study of Chaung Tha Beach Resort. Data are derived from structured and opened interviews conducted to local peoples, owners of economic activities those who are directly related to resort development and local authority concerns. The results reveals that (1) Chaung Tha changed from primary economic activities such as coconut plantation and fishing to service industry in the late 1990s, (2) With the development of resort, new capital investments came from Patheingyi and Yangon in many sectors while people (work force) from various parts of Ayeyarwady Region were migrated to Chaung Tha, (3) Only some educated native people or those who has connection with peoples from more developed regions could successfully adapted to newly emerged (service) economy, (4) Majority of native people are not well educated and could not compete with the newly migrated people in many jobs. Thus, the role of native people is gradually diminishing with the development of Chaung Tha. Contribution of local people to the development of Chaung Tha should be restored by means of promoting local cultures and identity such as production of *Theyetaw* cake, selling of Rakhine cuisine. This identity building and commodification of culture could support the sustainable development of Chaung Tha.

**Key words:** native people, exogenous development, Chaung Tha Beach Resort.

### Introduction

Geographical study of tourism is recently emphasized on the economic, social and cultural impact of the area concerned. It is considered that tourist industry may create much-needed employment and income in a locality. Although most serious impact of tourism is environmental whether in the form of pollution, loss of habitat or erosion, it can also threaten the integrity of a locality's society and culture (Johnston, et al., 1995). Chaung Tha is a resort area famous for its beautiful and gentle slope beach. Its development history dated back only to two or three decades. Development process changed

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1. Dr, Professor, Department of Geography, Dagon University.
  2. Assistant Lecturer, Department of Geography, Taungtha University.
  3. Dr, Assistant Lecturer, Department of Geography, Taungtha University.
  4. Assistant Lecturer, Department of Geography, Taungtha University.



Chaung Tha from a village of coconut trees to a town of tourist industry within last 20 years.

Macro economic theories considered that economic activities gradually changed from primary to secondary and then to tertiary as an evolution. Economic development process is explained in two forms: exogenous and endogenous (Plummer and Taylor, 2001). In case of Chaung Tha, it is clearly exogenous. It means that development of the study area is based on the investment which comes from the outside area. For the native people, there were two drastic changes in their economy during this development process. First, they have to adopt newly emerged service economy while losing their traditional coconut plantation and farming. Second, this adaptation process became more difficult due to increasing competition for job with newly migrated people from outside area. In this situation, the role of native people in the development process of Chaung Tha area and their way of adaptation to the changing economy is worth examining as a process of exogenous development model. Since Chaung Tha is a famous seaside resort, geographical studies were already carried out from various points of view. Aye Myint, et, al. (1995) made a comprehensive study on the development of Chaung Tha Beach Resort and reveals the beautiful physical features (esp. beach) of Chaung Tha and improved transportation as major causes of recent development. Development of Chaung Tha beach and its contribution to the region was documented by Ye Ye Cho (2000). Recently, analysis on the physical features of Chaung Tha was made by Ni Ni Lwin (2010). However, there is no analytical study on the development of Chaung Tha related to its native people.

### *Research questions*

Based on the above research background the research questions of this paper are defined as follows:

1. How Chaung Tha Beach Resort was developed?
2. What are the main causes that contribute to the development of Chaungtha Beach Resort?
3. What are the roles of native people in the development process of Chuang Tha Beach Resort?

### *Data and method*

To be able to answer the above research questions, both primary and secondary data were collected from the study area through 3 field trips. During the first field trip (January, 2011), official data such as population, number of hotels, restaurants, etc. were collected from the Chaungtha Village Tract Peace and Development Council (now Chaungtha Village Tract Administration Office). In addition, extensive open interviews were conducted to the authority concerns and local people about the nature and development of the Chaung Tha. Based on the information and data derived from first field trip research questions, type of data collection and analysis methods were decided. During the second field trip (April, 2011), structured interviews were conducted to 373 households in their house by using random sampling method. Since there were 2577 households in the village it covers about 14.5 percent of total population. Thus, conclusion could be made as 95% probability level based on data. Open interviews were also conducted to some economically successful native peoples, about their history and causes of success. In addition, structured interviews were also conducted to 14 hotels, 28 guest houses, 37 restaurants and tea shops and 69 souvenir shops. Derived data were analysed by constructing database in Microsoft Excel. Some facts and figures were reconfirmed during the third field trip (June, 2011).

### **Development of Chaung Tha as a Beach Resort**

Chaung Tha is located at the eastern side of Bay of Bengal. There are mountains those are continuation of Rakhine Yoma along the road of Patheingyi-Chaung Tha. Chaung Tha Beach is located along the narrow strip between mountain and sea. Administratively, it is included in the Shwe-Thaung-Yan Sub-township of Patheingyi District. The formation of sandy slope is very gentle in the facing side of Bay of Bengal (Figure 1). It is about 2.5 kilometer long. Although sandy slope is found in the southern side where Chaung Tha Creek is flowing into the Bay of Bengal near Aungmyingalar Kyun, tidal flow is relatively swift and slope is irregular. Mangrove forests are found along the Chaung Tha Creek while sandy beach was originally occupied by coconut trees. There were some farm lands near the mountainous western part. But, these farm lands were also changed into residential lands with town expansion project.































