

## PROMOTING CULTURAL VALUES IN THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF ETHNIC MINORITY COMMUNITIES (CASE STUDY OF DAO COMMUNITY - BASED TOURISM VILLAGE IN NAM DAM VILLAGE, QUAN BA COMMUNE, QUAN BA DISTRICT, HA GIANG PROVINCE)

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<b>Received:</b> 09/3/2023	The article researches the issue of promoting cultural values in the socio-economic development in the community - based tourism village of the Dao people in Nam Dam village, Quan Ba commune, Quan Ba district, Ha Giang province. The research methods used are document analysis, secondary data, fieldwork with in-depth interviews, group discussions, and interdisciplinary analysis. Research results show that, since 2011, after the support of Caritas organization (Switzerland) and the Center for People and Nature (PanNature) with the project "Tourism for the poor", socio-economic life of the Dao ethnic group in Nam Dam has gradually changed. Moreover, with a sense of proactively preserving and promoting ethnic cultural values in tourism development, up to now, Nam Dam has received the ASEAN tourism award three times, and an annual award to honor localities and businesses with high quality tourism products and services, contributing to the sustainable development of tourist destinations in the ASEAN region. That affirms community-based tourism in Nam Dam is an effective direction in preserving and promoting cultural values associated with socio-economic development goals.
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## PHÁT HUY GIÁ TRỊ VĂN HÓA TRONG PHÁT TRIỂN KINH TẾ - XÃ HỘI CỘNG ĐỒNG DÂN TỘC THIỂU SỐ (NGHIÊN CỨU TRƯỜNG HỢP LÀNG DU LỊCH CỘNG ĐỒNG NGƯỜI DAO Ở THÔN NẬM ĐẮM, XÃ QUẢN BẠ, HUYỆN QUẢN BẠ, TỈNH HÀ GIANG)

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THÔNG TIN BÀI BÁO	TÓM TẮT
<b>Ngày nhận bài:</b> 09/3/2023	Bài viết nghiên cứu vấn đề phát huy giá trị văn hóa trong phát triển kinh tế - xã hội ở làng du lịch cộng đồng của người Dao thôn Nặm Đăm, xã Quản Bạ, huyện Quản Bạ, tỉnh Hà Giang. Phương pháp nghiên cứu được sử dụng là phân tích tài liệu, dữ liệu thứ cấp, điền dã thực địa với phỏng vấn sâu, thảo luận nhóm, và phân tích liên ngành. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy, từ năm 2011, sau khi có sự hỗ trợ của tổ chức Caritas (Thụy Sĩ) cùng Trung tâm con người và thiên nhiên (PanNature) với dự án “Du lịch vì người nghèo”, đời sống kinh tế - xã hội người Dao ở Nặm Đăm từng bước thay da đổi thịt. Hơn thế nữa, với ý thức chủ động gìn giữ và phát huy các giá trị văn hóa trong phát triển du lịch, đến nay, Nặm Đăm đã 3 lần nhận được giải thưởng du lịch Asean, giải thưởng thường niên nhằm tôn vinh các địa phương, đơn vị có sản phẩm du lịch, dịch vụ du lịch chất lượng cao, góp phần phát triển bền vững các điểm đến du lịch của khu vực Asean. Điều đó khẳng định, du lịch cộng đồng tại Nặm Đăm là hướng đi hiệu quả trong bảo tồn và phát huy giá trị văn hóa gắn với mục tiêu phát triển kinh tế - xã hội.
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190

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## 1. Introduction

Vietnam was one of the pioneer countries in ratifying the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage. This shows that Vietnam has soon realized that cultural values are a core element and a valuable asset of ethnic groups, communities and nations, and also a part of the human cultural heritage... Thus, preserving and promoting national cultural values in general and of ethnic groups in particular is essential in order to build a unified Vietnamese culture in diversity [1]. After Resolution No. 24 (Term IX) on Ethnic Affairs, in addition to well implementing guidelines and policies of the Party and State, conservation and promotion of cultural values of ethnic minorities has been associated with livelihood development, economic development, hunger eradication and poverty reduction for ethnic minorities. Many economic models, many eco-tourism areas and community-based tourism have brought higher and higher levels of economic income and created jobs for the people. At the same time, those same economic models have preserved, restored and promoted many traditional cultural values. Therefore, the policy of preserving and developing the culture of ethnic groups of the Vietnamese State has always been an important part of the overall policy of socio-economic development of the country [2].

With strengths in diverse natural and cultural assets, the tourism industry is an important vehicle for economic growth, job creation and shared prosperity in Vietnam. Decision No.147/QĐ-TTg dated January 22, 2020 of the Prime Minister approving "Vietnam's tourism development strategy to 2030" affirms that tourism will become a key economic sector in 2030. In addition, tourism development in Vietnam should focus on tourism culture, linking tourism development with conservation and promotion of heritage values and national cultural identity [3].

Community-based tourism is developed based on the cultural values of community, managed, exploited and benefited by the residential community. Service development of community-based tourism is the process of increasing and perfecting tourism services such as travel, transportation, accommodation, meals, drinks, entertainment, information, guidance and other services to meet the needs of tourists in which the local community directly organizes and provides services to tourism development contributing to increasing income, preserving cultural and natural resources, environment [4].

In the current socio-economic development, orientation of ethnic minority areas, ethnic cultural values from tangible culture to intangible culture are interested and exploited [5]. More specifically, community-based tourism is a new livelihood direction that brings income to local communities, creates jobs on the spot, contributes to poverty reduction, and improves quality of life. Simultaneously with the trend of exploiting cultural values for tourism, local people raise their awareness and actively preserve ethnic cultural identity. This is a sustainable direction in the goal of preserving and promoting cultural values in parallel with socio-economic development [6].

Recently, Ha Giang has successfully developed community-based tourism based on lessons learned domestically and internationally. Moreover, Ha Giang is also the northernmost point of the country, has a strategic position in terms of national security, economy - society and ethnic culture in the border area. The issue of developing community-based tourism in Ha Giang is currently quite concerned [5], [7], [8].

Inheriting the above viewpoints and practical studies, the article analyzed deeply the cultural values of the Dao ethnic group in Nam Dam village, Quan Ba, Ha Giang in the orientation of tourism exploitation for the purpose of socio-economic development. That is a way to contribute to preserving and promoting the cultural values of the Dao people effectively and sustainably.

## 2. Methods

The article used 2 main methods:

The article used document analysis, secondary data method, inheriting previous studies on community - based tourism issues, conservation and promotion of ethnic culture, Nam Dam village, Quan Ba, Ha Giang.

In addition, the field method was carried out with in depth interviews and discussion groups with the local community to clearly show the reality of preserving and promoting the cultural values of the Dao people in tourism exploitation. On that basis, we proposed solutions to improve the efficiency of cultural conservation and promotion in parallel with socio-economic development of the Dao people in Nam Dam.

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1. Situation of exploiting cultural values in tourism development in Nam Dam

Nam Dam cultural and tourist village is located in Nam Dam village, about 2 km from Tam Son town, Quan Ba commune, Quan Ba district, Ha Giang. Nam Dam village has a total natural area of 458 hectares with 60 households, 100% of whom are Dao ethnic people, belonging to the Dao Cham group, also known as Dao Ao dai with the clothes's indigo color or the woman's long shirt's. It has many favorable conditions to develop agriculture and tourism such as fertile land; many traditional houses; a pharmaceutical processing zone; many attractive dishes and unique customs, festivals, songs and folk dances... The natural scenery and ethnic identity have created a unique cultural space in Nam Dam, attracting tourists. Since 2011, the Dao village in Nam Dam has started exploiting community - based tourism. However, not until 2017, with the attention of local authorities and the new rural project, did Dao people really participate in community - based tourism in a synchronous and effective manner.

The basic products of Nam Dam community - based tourism are traditional houses with brocade decoration to serve the accommodation needs of tourists. The unique of the traditional houses is a half of floor and half of land, bearing the culture of Dao Ao dai ethnic group associated with the center spaces in the distribution map of ethnic groups in Vietnam. With the support of local authorities and the efforts of the community, currently in Nam Dam, there are 26 traditional houses reporting to be put into operating homestay services at an average price of 100,000 VND/guest. From the traditional houses model, there are 7 families exploiting traditional houses as bungalows with a total of about 30 bungalows, an average price of 600,000 VND/one. In addition to preserving traditional houses, the investment in facilities to ensure accommodation for tourists has brought regular and stable economic income for households.

The traditional costumes with the main color is indigo color and dot points on the indigo fabric are decorative patterns. The head scarf is a black indigo cloth with a red cloth about 5-6 cm wide so that when worn, the red border of the scarf is exposed on the sides of the ears; the upper is embroidered with a pattern, mainly with white, blue, red, yellow, black threads. This is the highlight of the traditional costume of the Dao Ao dai woman. Currently, during peak times, the costumes are rented according to the demands of tourists with service prices ranging from 20,000 to 50,000 VND/day depending on the costumes.

Dao Ao dai people have a unique cuisine associated with life, production and activities. The dishes are simple but special agricultural products such as hill chicken, boiled meat, dried meat dishes, sour marinated, sour bamboo shoots soup and smoked meat dishes, grilled fish served with five-color sticky rice... Traditional dishes are included in the menu prepared for tourists to enjoy when coming to Nam Dam. The value of meals is around 50,000 – 200,000 VND.

The Ao Dai people in Nam Dam cultivate terraced fields and do some unique crafts such as making silver jewelry, embroidering fabrics... These activities also become one of the cultural experience products for tourists to discover about the farming culture, survival and development of the highland community.

If the Mong ethnic groups are considered as a master of the high mountains, the Dao ethnic groups are considered as a doctor of humanity. As a community with a residential space associated with the forest, in the knowledge of Dao people there are many valuable remedies. Currently in Nam Dam, it has been effectively exploiting herbal bath services to help people improve health. In addition, with the support of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Tran Van On (Plant Department, Hanoi University of Pharmacy), Nam

Dam Community Cooperative has launched bottled Nam Dam herbal bath products, which can be easily transported, become local products purchased by tourists for use or as gifts.

The diversity and uniqueness in the customs and habits of Dao people are also a strength that create attraction for community - based tourism in Nam Dam. The most typical is Cap Sac ceremony and spiritual rituals. The Cap Sac ceremony is an opportunity to remind generations of Dao people about their history and origin. Thereby, there is also a value in educating cultural traditions and national proud. The system of worship paintings, dance art, decoration of the altar... in the spiritual rituals of the Dao people is the unique culture of the ethnic group. It is not only an expression of religious beliefs but also a reflection of the worldview of Dao Ao dai people with their life.

The folklore of the Dao is very diverse, including myths, stories, poetry, folk songs, proverbs, riddles, which reflects the community's conception of the universe, human outlook, and the world. The most unique is the art of response singing Pao Dung with rustic and simple lyrics that are flexible in activities, festivals, exchanges, weddings... The lyrics are the words of thoughts, feelings and desires of Dao people in daily life.

### ***3.2. The results of promoting cultural values in the socio-economic development in Nam Dam's tourism activities***

#### ***3.2.1. Preserving and promoting cultural values***

With the unique traditional cultural values of the ethnic group, the community - based tourism village of the Dao people in Nam Dam has become an attractive destination for tourists. Nam Dam is increasingly known to tourists by its friendly and cozy space, surrounded by a system of primeval forests and rich terraced fields. Under the guidance of the local government, the community is self-aware and together to mobilize, share, preserve and promote the typical cultural features: preserving the wall folds, yin and yang tile roofs, costumes, cuisine, traditional festivals, folk songs, folk dances... Here, all houses are built from local materials which can be recycled to reduce construction costs and create a "green" space being environmentally friendly. Currently, the village maintains two folk art teams and a mass performance team that both serve tourists, preserve and teach folk songs and dances to the younger generation. The profession of medicine is authorized by the Party Committee and local authorities to facilitate cooperatives to make products with diverse labels and packages and choose one of the district's OCOP products (*One Commune One Product*). Currently, in the village, there is a showroom for the products of Nam Dam Community Cooperative, including ginger tea, Dao bathing medicine, Shan Tuyet tea, medicinal wine, essential oils... allowing visitors to experience and shop directly here.

After 10 years of implementing the construction of a typical cultural tourism village associated with new rural construction, Nam Dam has basically met the criteria according to specific requirements such as a tourism management board, the club of homestay service households were established, the Nam Dam community - based tourism service cooperative have built a base for processing medicinal herbs and a model of bathing with medicinal leaves. In 2022, Nam Dam community - based tourism village was assessed by Ha Giang Provincial People's Committee as 4\* OCOP.

In 2017, Dao homestays in Nam Dam village received the ASEAN homestay Award.

In January 2022, Nam Dam received the ASEAN Award for the model of accommodation combined with introducing, experiencing and preserving heritage on the UNESCO Global Geopark Dong Van Stone Plateau. Nam Dam village head, Ly Ta Danh, shared: "We are very pleased when the village has received the ASEAN Homestay Award".

In particular, in February 2023, Nam Dam reached ASEAN Community Based Tourism Standards in the period of 2023 - 2025. The above awards are a mark of quality, creating effects, spreading in development, creating brand of community - based tourism products to develop tourism in Nam Dam village.

### 3.2.2. Economic development

Realizing the attraction of Nam Dam's cultural resources, Caritas organization (Switzerland) and, People and Natural center (PanNature) allocated the project "Travel for the poor at Nam Dam rural area" from 2011. Besides, funding support to upgrade accommodation and construct sanitization facilities help to ensure accommodation needs for tourists. Project team members also guided indigenous people in replanning accommodation places, removing stables far away from the residential areas to keep the environment clean.

Additionally, local people were trained on how to use social media accounts (Facebook, website...) to promote their own model of community - based tourism. Nam Dam is a tourist attraction that can be spotted at the entrance of Ha Giang Karst plateau, the number of visitors is rapidly increasing, as shown in Table 1.

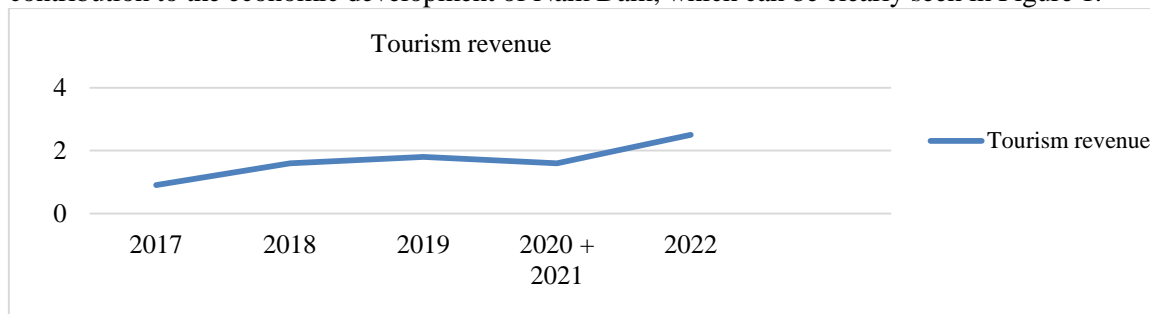
**Table 1.** The number of visitors in Nam Dam in the period of 2017 – 2022 (Unit: person)

	2017	2018	2019	2020 + 2021	2022
<b>Number of homestays</b>	17	20	26	26	26
<b>Number of tourists</b>	4441	8850	9000	7300	9655
<i>Number of international tourists</i>	<i>1350</i>	<i>3720</i>	<i>4720</i>	<i>1936</i>	<i>2595</i>
<i>Number of domestic tourists</i>	<i>3091</i>	<i>5048</i>	<i>4280</i>	<i>5364</i>	<i>7060</i>

(Source: Report of Socio-economic development, The People's Committee of Quan Ba commune)

Starting to be exploited in 2011, after gradually stabilizing, the number of visitors to Nam Dam soared over the years from 2017 to 2019. Between 2020 and 2021, Vietnam tourism was heavily affected by Covid. Thus, the number of visitors traveling in Vietnam decreased considerably. In 2022, Nam Dam had a strong improvement when tourism activities recovered after the pandemic.

With the attention of local authorities, the support of organizations and the efforts of the community, Nam Dam is having strong economic transformations. The revenue from tourists makes an important contribution to the economic development of Nam Dam, which can be clearly seen in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Revenue from Nam Dam tourism in the period 2017 – 2022 (Unit: billion VND)

(Source: Report of Socio-economic development, The People's Committee of Quan Ba commune)

The percentage of poor and near-poor households decreased, as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2.** The number of poor households and near - poor households in Nam Dam in the period of 2017 – 2022 (Unit: household)

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>Number of households</b>	55	58	59	60	60
<b>Number of Poor households</b>	1	2	1	11	4
<b>Number of Near - poor households</b>	6	6	6	2	7

(Source: Report of Socio-economic development, The People's Committee of Quan Ba commune)

Since 2021, Decree 07/2021/ND-CP on the multidimensional poverty line replaced Decision 59/2015/QĐ-TTg. As a result, the number of poor and near-poor households increased compared to before 2021. However, in 2022, there were 2 households escaping poverty and 5 households from poor households to near-poor households.

Previously, the primary source of income of the Dao community in Nam Dam was agriculture. Since the orientation of exploiting and developing community-based tourism, the economic structure has been changed. People's income is mainly from tourism revenue, which is better and more stable. Table 3 shows the per capita income of tourism households in the Nam Dam area.

**Table 3.** *Income average monthly of some households in Nam Dam in 2022 (Unit: VND)*

First and last name of the head of the household	Per capita income
Ly Ta Danh	42,000,000
Ly Ta Han	43,000,000
Ly Ta Quan	46,000,000
Ly Ta Chun	43,200,000
Ly Ta Hi	51,000,000
Ly Ta Dat	46,800,000
Ly Ta Dao	42,000,000
Ly Ta Min	41,000,000
Ly Ta Thang	41,200,000
Ly Ta Don	40,400,000
Ly Ta Nhui	44,000,000
Ly Ta Thi	42,900,000
Ly Ta Thi	42,600,000

*(Source: Synthesized from the fieldwork)*

### 3.2.3. Social development

Due to the requirements of tourism exploitation, the Nam Dam villages' infrastructure is changing day by day. At the present, 26/60 households have houses that meet homestay services, with system of standard bathrooms, self-contained toilets, internet services, and amenities (televisions, refrigerators, and motorbikes, etc.). Almost all households use electricity from the national grid and hygienic domestic water. The village landscape is spacious, clean, and 100% concreted. The living space ensures environmental factors for the livestock and poultry barn when the system is re-planned and moved away from the place of residential areas.

Table 4 shows that the living standard of people in Nam Dam village has changed positively since developing tourism.

**Table 4.** *Living standard of people in Nam Dam in 2022*

Fields	Number of households	Percentage (%)
Television	60/60	100
Motorbike	60/60	100
Internet	26/60	43.3
Pupils from primary school to secondary schools	54/60	90
Pupils from secondary schools to high schools	48/60	80
Students in university	5/60	8.3

*(Source: Synthesized from the fieldwork)*

Furthermore, tourism contributes to raising the knowledge and awareness of Nam Dam people. They promote community cohesion in tourism to jointly develop socio-economic development while preserving traditional culture. Tourism industry does not only benefit households with homestay services but also support, and promote community relationships. This means that households are willing to share with each other when exploiting services to serve the needs of tourists. For example, all indigenous people indirectly participate in tourism such as embroidering and sewing brocade products to sell to tourists; participating in cultural performances; nurturing pigs, chickens, growing vegetables and fruits to sell to homestay families. Moreover, many households combine to contribute funds and use the same biogas system to save fuel and protect the environment. Besides the training programs of the authorities at all levels in the village, there are often "self-training" sessions by exchanging and sharing experiences in tourism among households.

From an isolated lifestyle, the local community gradually becomes confident, friendly and open in communication with tourists. Tourists arriving in Nam Dam have the same assessment of a tourist village with "great space, especially the climate and their culture".

In order to manage and develop tourism in the right direction, the rural area has established and maintained the activities of the community - based tourism management board, the club of households providing homestay services... Income from tourism of each household contributes to the benefit of the community. Every month, households welcome guests to stay and contribute 8,000 VND/guest (\$0.32) into the village's general fund. This fund is used by the village for the general purpose of beautifying the village landscape: cleaning, planting trees, conducting and organizing self-training classes, and sharing experiences in tourism.

### ***3.3. Proposing solutions to improve the effectiveness of promoting cultural values in socio-economic development of Dao people in Nam Dam village, Quan Ba commune, Quan Ba district, Ha Giang province***

*Village landscape planning:* Community - based tourism has an attraction not only from ethnic culture but also from the beauty of the natural scenery. With the residence space in Ha Giang highland, it is possible to invest, plan the general landscape from the alley, village road to the gate of the house, the garden of the homestay in Nam Dam with characteristics such as the path of flowers into the village (peach blossoms, plum blossoms, pear blossoms, vegetables flowers...), bamboo garden, fruit trees... These things will help create a unique mark for Nam Dam community - based tourism village and help visitors experience a space in harmony with nature during the days of stay and relaxation in the village.

*Focusing on developing specific tourism products:* Traditional medicine is a typical tourism product in Nam Dam, making a difference and attractiveness compared to other tourist destinations. Local authorities can support training to improve the knowledge and quality of human resources in health services combined with the use of folk herbal, promote spa services, diversify medicinal products such as essential oils... It is also important to diversify souvenir products from brocade embroidery, batik pattern, for example, creating daily costumes with indigo and brocade patterns, scarves, bags, pillow case, wallet, decorations...

*Strengthening the level of tourism human resources:* In addition to government training courses, projects..., it is necessary to promote the exchange and learning of community - based tourism models in other localities, in other tourism business (hotels, restaurants 4, 5\*) to improve the quality of accommodation services, food, cultural experiences...

*Strengthening product linkages:* Ha Giang has the advantage of developing tourism from the ethnic cultural diversity and uniqueness of the natural landscape of the rock plateau highland. Promoting the linkage of tourism products with other places in the province to develop community - based tourism activities will create more attraction in Nam Dam tourism development: linking some community - based tourism villages such as Hmong village, Lo Lo Chai, Giay Ma Le...; connecting tours to some districts: Yen Minh, Dong Van, Meo Vac; participating in cultural, artistic, sports activities and major events of the province: Surf boat race; car race; traditional Mong ethnic embroidery and sewing traditional festivals; cultural, sports and tourism festivals of ethnic groups in Quan Ba district...

*Promoting the role of reputable people in the community:* Currently, Nam Dam village has been effectively promoting community in supporting and sharing experiences to develop economy, culture and society from tourism business. The management and community - based tourism cooperatives all have the participation of the village chief or deputy, directly the Dao people who do tourism. That confirms the role of reputable people in the community. Local authorities need to have policies to further promote the role of reputable people: promoting training, supporting, perfecting mechanisms and policies to focus on fostering, improving knowledge, developing programs and training plans for reputable people...

*Promoting the role of the community:* The attention of local authorities, support from non-governmental projects, investment links of enterprises have created momentum for socio-economic development of Nam Dam. However, while exploiting the community - based tourism village model, it is always necessary to emphasize the role of the community - the creative subject, maintaining and operating cultural values. The local community must always be as the owner of that tourist destination. Businesses must be interested in sharing the benefits to the community. The more people's interests are enhanced and paid attention, the more attractive the tourist destination is, attracting a large number of tourists to visit.

#### 4. Conclusion

Resolution of the 9th Plenum of the 11th Party Central Committee affirmed: "Culture is the spiritual foundation of society, both the goal and the driving force for socio-economic development" [12]. The research results show that community-based tourism in Nam Dam brought income, improving living standards, contributing to preserving the traditional culture of the Dao people. The current issue is achieving the goal of sustainable development, benefiting from tourism in accordance with ensuring environmental, social and cultural sustainability. That requires a combination of the government and the community, tourism businesses to synchronously and effectively implement the proposed solutions.

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