



**SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS ASSOCIATED  
WITH TOURISM IN THE CAM MOUNTAIN TOURIST  
AREA AN GIANG PROVINCE, VIETNAM**

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**Abstract:**

Learning about socio-economic development in Vietnam recently, the issue of livelihoods and sustainable livelihoods has become a research target with many different approaches. Based on the theory of sustainable livelihood framework put forward by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), the article outlines the sources of livelihood capital of local people. With the method of sociological investigation, statistics and data analysis, the article has presented the types of sustainable livelihoods associated with tourism in the Cam Mountain tourist area, An Giang province. This study also wants to replicate the types of sustainable livelihoods associated with tourism in terms of scale and quality to contribute to the economic, social, and environmental development of the locality.

**Keywords:** An Giang province, Cam Mountain, sustainable livelihood framework, tourism

**1. Introduction**

Livelihood is a matter of interest to many socio-economic researchers in recent times. The livelihood approach helps the researcher to have a comprehensive view of the socio-economic activities of the development subjects, to discover the specific advantages and disadvantages of each object in the research process. When approaching the issue of

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development from a livelihood perspective, the focus is not only on growth but also on the socio-economic welfare of the people.

An Giang has the mysterious Seven Mountains region located on the territory of two districts of Tri Ton and Tinh Bien, with a special topography in the Mekong Delta combined with the unique features of Khmer culture in Vietnam that favorable conditions for tourism exploitation and economic development of the locality. On that basis, the livelihood of people in Tinh Bien district in general and households in the Nui Cam tourist area, in particular, have many conditions to develop in a diversified, dynamic, and effective direction, in which prominent are the livelihoods related to tourism activities. These livelihoods have had a positive impact on the income of local households, contributing to the socio-economic development of Tinh Bien district and An Giang province.

However, the livelihoods associated with tourism of people in Nui Cam tourist area, Tinh Bien district, An Giang province today are still limited due to inadequacies in accessing tourism resources, ways of exploiting tourism resources, and the lack of professionalism of the participating households. At the same time, the process of developing people's livelihoods in general and livelihoods associated with tourism, in particular, is giving rise to conflicts with the protection of the environment and tourism resources, increasing the risk of damage to the interests of tourists. the people here. The above situation shows that, in order to develop tourism in the Nui Cam tourist area effectively and rationally exploit resources, it is necessary to associate tourism with economic activities of local people through creating create tourism-related livelihoods for households, combine agricultural and non-agricultural livelihoods with tourism to improve competitiveness, limit fragmentation towards sustainable development.

Stemming from the reality and urgency of the problem, this study wishes to find out suitable sustainable livelihoods for households in order to develop the local tourism strengths towards sustainable development, contributing to improving the position of the tourism industry in the economic structure of Tinh Bien district as well as the comprehensive socio-economic development of An Giang province.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Overview of Cam Mountain tourist area, An Giang province**

Cam Mountain Resort belongs to An Giang Tourism Development Joint Stock Company, located in An Hao Commune, Tinh Bien district, An Giang province. Cam Mountain is 716 m high, located in the majestic Seven Mountains region, known as the roof of the Mekong Delta. The average daily temperature of Cam Mountain ranges from 20-25 degrees Celsius, always giving visitors cool, fresh air. On the mountain, there are many attractive attractions such as Thuy Liem lake, Maitreya Buddha statue, Zen Monastery Big Buddha Temple, Van Linh pagoda.

Having many tourism resources, Cam Mountain in An Giang province is a type of pilgrimage, resort, and ecological tourist area of the Southwest region. With rich tourism

resources and many large-scale investment entertainment projects, the tourist area has a cable car route with a length of 3.5 km, with two stations, including 16 pillars; 89 cabins with a capacity of 2000 people/hour. Cam Mountain tourist area is a fun and sightseeing place chosen by many tourists in the past time.

## **2.2. Livelihood concept, sustainable livelihoods and sustainable livelihoods framework DFID**

### **2.2.1. Livelihood**

Livelihood is a concept that is often understood and used in many ways and at different levels. The first person to use this concept was Robert Chambers with the following meaning: Livelihood consists of capabilities, assets, approaches (storage, resources, ownership, rights to use), and activities required necessary for life. Analyzing the DFID Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, livelihoods include the capabilities, assets (including physical and social resources), and activities need to earn a living.

In Vietnam, the concept of livelihood did explain by the Vietnamese Dictionary with the meaning: livelihood is a job to earn a living. In the research world, the conception of livelihood has only appeared recently based on absorbing the concepts of foreign authors. The concept of "livelihood" or "survival activity" or "way of earning a living" is used by researchers in their studies when studying human economic activities.

### **2.2.2. Sustainable livelihood**

An important question raised in livelihood research is what is a sustainable livelihood, while the concept of livelihood is becoming increasingly important in related research. The definition of sustainable livelihood is interpreted by Hanstad as: A livelihood is sustainable when it can respond to and recover from impacts or can promote capabilities and assets at present and in the future while not eroding the foundation of natural resources. Author Koos Neefjes explains sustainable livelihoods: A livelihood must depend on capabilities and assets (both physical and social resources) and activities that are all necessary for a livelihood. A person's or a family's livelihood is sustainable when they can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks, and sustain or enhance their abilities and assets and in the future. without harming environmental resources. Sustainable livelihoods are an important issue in the study of people's livelihoods in the Cam Mountain tourist area, An Giang province. On the one hand, to ensure socio-economic development and environmental protection, on the other hand, to develop the full potential of tourism resources here.

### **2.2.3. Sustainable livelihood framework DFID**

The livelihoods approach according to the sustainable livelihood framework presented in the studies of Chambers and Conway, Scoones. In particular, the sustainable livelihoods analysis framework developed by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) was widely applied by scholars and development agencies in the

analysis of livelihoods and poverty. In this analysis framework, factors, and components that make up livelihoods include:

- 1) Human-recognizable priorities;
- 2) The strategies they choose to pursue those priorities;
- 3) Institutions, policies, and organizations that determine their access to assets or opportunities and the outcomes they obtain;
- 4) Their approaches to the five types of capital and their ability to use them effectively;
- 5) People's living context, including economic, technological, population, and seasonal trends.

Referring to the concept of capital, the framework for sustainable livelihood analysis assumes that people use the capital they have to make a living. People rely on five types of capital assets, or forms of capital, for livelihood security or poverty alleviation, including:

- 1) Such physical capital is the infrastructure and commodities that producers need to support livelihoods;
- 2) Financial capital implies financial resources that people use to achieve their life goals;
- 3) Social capital is the social resources people use to pursue their livelihood goals, including relationships, networks, group membership, trust, interdependence, and provide important informal security networks;
- 4) Human capital represents skills, knowledge, employability, and good health, all of which form the conditions that enable people to pursue different livelihood strategies and achieve their goals. At the household level, human capital is the quantity and quality of labor employed by the household, and this type of capital varies depending on the size of the household, education and occupational skills, management ability, situation health status, knowledge of formal and informal property structures such as rights, laws, norms, governmental structures, procedures);
- 5) Natural capital is all the natural materials for the construction of a livelihood. Many resources make up natural capital including land, water, forests, biodiversity, and non-renewable resources.

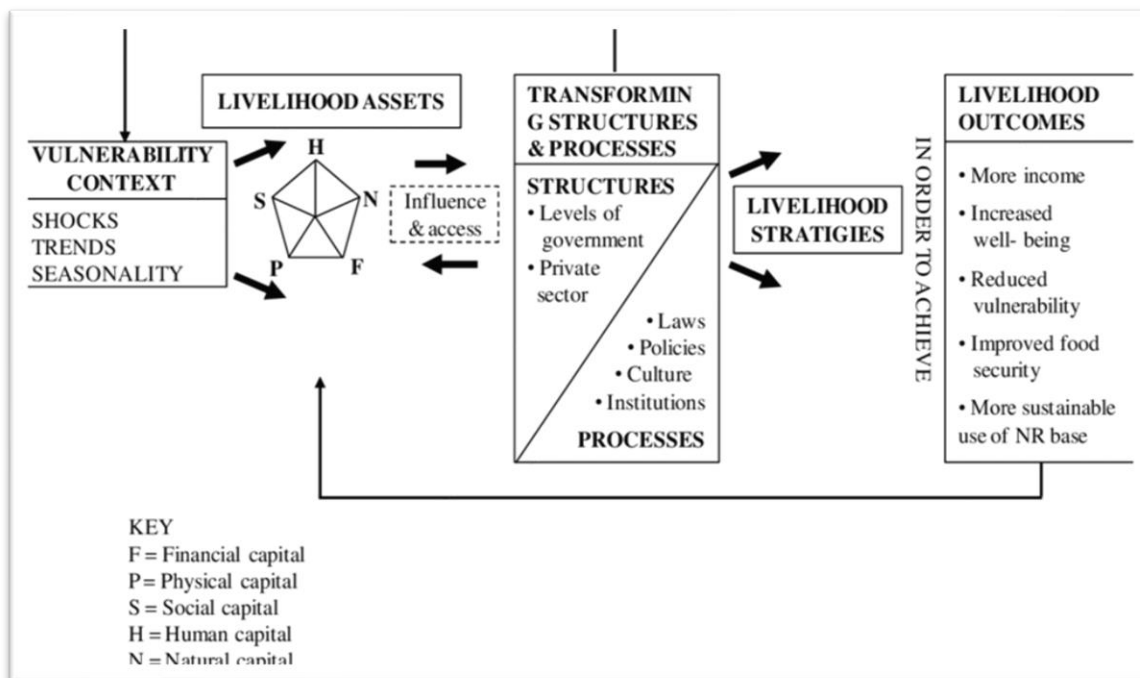


Figure 1: Sustainable Livelihood framework (source: <https://www.enonline.net>)

### 3. Material and Methods

#### 3.1. Research materials

Research articles by domestic and foreign authors on livelihood issues, sustainable livelihoods, and tourism development. The documents on population characteristics, livelihoods, and related to the socio-economic development of the study area were provided from the Management Board of Nui Cam Tourist Area, Tinh Bien District Statistical Office, and the Statistics Department An Giang province.

#### 3.2. Research methods

- Method of sociological investigation: using sociological survey method to assess the potential as well as the current status of livelihood and tourism development of Cam Mountain tourist area, An Giang province. Using this method allows quantitative research on the outcomes of education, living standards, income as well as types of livelihoods of households in the study area.

- Field survey method: the field survey method is one of the main research methods because the study needs to conduct a field survey in the Cam Mountain tourist area to find out the characteristics of the territory as well as the livelihoods of the households in the area. In the research, this method is combined with the sociological survey method to have the data analyzed and achieve the desired results. In addition to the above methods, the study also uses other methods such as statistics, comparison, map-chart method, forecasting method.

## 4. Results and discussion

### 4.1. Sustainable livelihoods associated with tourism

#### a. Agricultural livelihoods associated with tourism

Agricultural production activities of the people are put into tourism service, increasing economic revenue and diversifying types of tourism. Current agricultural production models include:

- Model of a net house with a total area of 15,000m<sup>2</sup> to grow melons and vegetables of all kinds. Initially, this model brings economic efficiency, minimizes the number of pesticides, and combats environmental pollution.
- Agricultural models applying high technology such as the Bay Nui organic farm raises 2,400 pigs and 30,000 chickens, combining the model of growing melons, cassava plants, and red beans in sandy soil.
- Model of growing medicinal plants in combination with tourism and medical treatment at Cam Mountain. The total area of medicinal plants interspersed under the forest canopy is 1,000 ha (in 2020), and 2,500 ha by 2030. Medicinal plants include indigenous species such as cloves, fenugreek, yellow turmeric, three halves, ginger, red ha tho, Ky Huong, ground ginseng, and Kim Tien Thao, and some other species, depending on the treatment needs and orders of the partner's medicinal herbs.

#### b. Model of the ecological garden on Cam Mountain

- Tangerine garden on Cam mountain in Vo Ba hamlet, An Hao commune of Mr. Chau Donl, Khmer ethnic has achieved high efficiency. Every year in the harvest season, his garden welcomes many tourists to visit and take souvenir photos.
- *Chayote garden on the mountain*: chayote is a tree grown by residents on Cam mountain so far, helping to improve income for many households. Cam mountain fruit is a specialty of the Southwest region, attracting many curious tourists to visit and enjoy the dishes made from this kind of gift.
- *Wax avocado garden*: the area of waxy avocado growing on Cam mountain is about 15 hectares. The People's Committee of An Hao commune has cooperated with the agricultural sector of Tinh Bien district to build a model of waxing avocado cultivation. The area planted to wax avocados is replicated to increase local income and develop tourism. The waxy avocado garden of Mr. Tran Hoang Anh has been brought high economic efficiency. In Cam Mountain, because people plant avocados under the forest canopy, the trees are slow to grow and have less fruit than in specialized cultivation areas. But thanks to planting in combination with other trees and serving tourism, avocado trees help people have a stable income.
- *Nui Cam durian garden*: durian trees appeared in Cam mountain for a long time. People here call it mountain durian to distinguish it from other durians on the market. This is a type of durian endemic to the Cam mountain region. The characteristic of this type of durian is that the trunk is quite tall and perennial, so it is difficult to care for and harvest. During the growing process, there is no need to take care of or use fertilizers and

pesticides. Durian fruit is not big, but the tree gives a lot of fruit. The Nui Cam durian garden is a destination for tourists to take pictures and enjoy the specialty durian here.

### **c. Service livelihood associated with tourism**

*Homestay accommodation service:* in developed tourist areas, homestay is probably too familiar to everyone. For Cam Mountain tourist areas, the appearance of homestay is a very new thing. Not only for tourists but also people living here. Because, so far, people here only do accommodation business by opening inns and motels mainly. Due to, the emergence of new types of accommodation such as homestay, bungalow it was like a new breeze for tourism here. "House in the clouds" is one of the homestays on Cam mountain that attracts many tourists to stay here. Usually, guests will go in groups, each group and can pre-order some specialties of Cam mountain such as mountain crabs, mountain snails, forest mushrooms. Guests can also enter the kitchen to prepare their dishes. In particular, the homestay also has a yard for visitors to organize outdoor picnic activities. According to visitors' feedback, they feel interested in experiencing the cold of Cam Mountain at night, sitting by the fire, enjoying specialty dishes, and feeling the peace of nature.

- *Traditional cuisine for tourism:* the first is Banh Xeo served with wild vegetables on Cam mountain. Banh Xeo is a rustic but extremely delicious dish. In the Cam Mountain tourist area, the Banh Xeo dish is more prominent when served with a variety of forest vegetables picked by the people of Cam mountain, giving diners a diverse, rich, and unique plate of forest vegetables. The second is "bun ca Nui Cam" with the taste snakehead fish that was stir-fried with turmeric and herbs household characteristics of the Khmer people. When tourists come to Cam Mountain An Giang province, visitors will enjoy a special "bun ca" with the flavor of the Bay Nui region of An Giang province. There are also many other dishes here that also contribute to the brand of Cam Mountain tourism. These types of cuisine have brought a significant amount of revenue, contributing to improving the lives of households here.

## **4.2. The relationship between livelihood and tourism**

When participating in local tourism activities, people living in the Cam Mountain tourist area will have many favorable conditions. When participating in local tourism activities, people living in the Cam Mountain tourist area will have many favorable conditions. Tourism has become the main source of family income or tourism has contributed to generating additional income for their family. Depending on the type of tourism business, the resource of income is more or less. Due to this, the types of livelihoods associated with tourism in Cam Mountain resort will be replicated and developed sustainably in the future.

On the other hand, tourism development also has negative impacts such as loss of tourism resources, environmental pollution, the emergence of social evils, unfair distribution of benefits to indigenous people. Therefore, local authorities need to have

reasonable solutions to both ensure tourism development and develop sustainable livelihoods.

## 5. Conclusion

Cam Mountain tourist area in An Giang province has many favorable conditions for natural tourism resources and humanistic tourism. People here have developed many diverse and effective livelihoods associated with tourism. In recent years, under the influence of new development policies, these livelihoods have shifted towards production for tourism on an increasingly large scale. Agriculture transforms in the direction of promoting the model of applying high technology to effectively produce new varieties such as growing cantaloupe, clean vegetables in greenhouses while maintaining indigenous crops such as durian, waxy avocado, chayote, and medicinal plants to serve tourists. The local advantages of cuisine were also used to create a unique appearance for tourism service livelihoods. Because of developing local livelihoods, people in Cam Mountain Resort have a better life, ensuring health and education conditions. People enjoy many policies to support product development and improve their lives, so they have risen to reduce poverty and escape poverty. However, the locality still has some limitations from livelihood activities associated with tourism such as environmental pollution, conflicts of economic interests between households. To develop sustainable livelihoods associated with tourism, local authorities and people need to have long-term orientations and diversify types of tourism to development livelihoods sustainably.

## Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interests.

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Source: <https://www.enonline.net>



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