

# influence of tourism on social institutions of Hmong people in Sapa

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Over a decade, Sapa tourism area established from early 20<sup>th</sup> century has developed rapidly. Tourism exerts great impact on many socio-economic aspects. Hmong is one of the largest ethnic minority in Sapa. There are a lot of Hmong' villages situated along the main tourist route, the fact that brings about great influence on the lives of Hmong people. In my limitation, we study comprehensively these affection of tourism to social institution, family, lineage, "giao" — village of Hmong. From my study, I offer some petitions in order to enhance the positive impacts, forecast and limit negative impacts to Hmong's life which contribute stable development direction of tourism in Hmong area in globalization. Sapa is one of the most famous tourist centers in the North formed from early 20<sup>th</sup> century. After a long destructive war, tourism has developed strongly from late 1920s. The development rate of tourism has been very rapid, welcome 68.000 tourists in 1993 and 120.000 in 2003 in which there were approximately 50.000 foreign tourists. Most of foreign tourists have visited Hmong's villages when they come to Sapa, especially Cat Cat, Ly Lao Chai and Sin Chai in San Sa Ho, Lao Chai communes, Pho mountain village in Hau Thao commune. Although the number of tourists come to Sapa' villages is not much but they bring strong impacts to these villages and have influence on social institutions of Hmong.

In order to understand how tourism impacts on family, lineage, village community relations, we use 4 following methods to collect data:

+ Observant and attendant method: Observing family relations, activities and rites of family and "giao" (villages) community in Hmong 's 4

villages in Sapa: Ly Lao Chai, Cat Cat, Sin Chai and Pho villages.

+ Questionnaire method: two villages Cat Cat and Ly Lao Chai in San Sa Ho and Lao Chai communes were selected in my study (two important tourist villages with crowd foreign visitors). We selected sample randomly from household list, one in two families in Cat Cat and one in three families in Lao Chai. We interviewed 30/60 households in Cat Cat and 30/90 in Lao Chai.

+ Individual interview method: We interviewed 21 Hmong persons who work for tourist service in villages and towns (13 females and 8 males, one person for two hours).

+ Group discussion method: 8 persons in Cat Cat (5 males and 3 females), 8 persons in Ly Lao Chai (4 males and 4 females). They are householders or persons who have important views in their families.

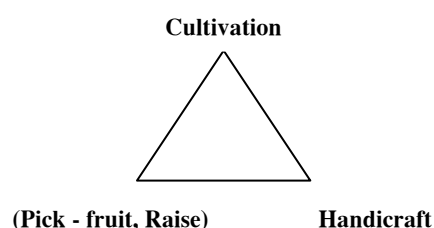
## 1. Impacts of tourism on Hmong families

The term "Family" — Hmong language is Tsêr nenhs (Che ninh) has been influenced greatly by tourism and market economy. Due to these impacts, Hmong' families have changes in style, functions, labour assignment and gender role in families.

### *1.1. Tourism have impacts on family economy*

In the past, The Hmong family in Sapa was an poor farming economic unit. Traditional economy structure of Hmong consisted three parts was cultivation (rice, maize, cardamom,

pick-fruit, raise) and handicraft which formed “a three- legged power” for economy development.



According to these traditional economy structures, cultivation played an important role in the Hmong’s life. Their income depended on growing rice, maize, cardamom. Breeding, pick in Hoang Lien Son forest and handicraft played weak role and depended on cultivation.

This structure is showed by following triangle:

Cultivation conditions in Sapa are very hard, cultivation styles are milpas and terraced fields that need labour of all families or villagers.

Nowadays, with development of tourism, these Hmong villages near town with various culture identities became attractive to visitors. Therefore, tourism has made economy life of Hmong change.

Firstly, there are a lot of new jobs appeared which contribute to tourism as brocade and jewelry services, motorbike — taxi driver, tourist guide.

*Table 1: Number of people attending tourism services*

Order number	Type of services	Cat Cat	Ly Lao Chai
1	Shift shop	72	77
2	Motorbike taxi	18	17
3	Souvenir shop at the market	6	5
4	Tourist guide	9	3
5	Art performance	7	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>112</b>	<b>102</b>

There are 360 Hmong people in Cat Cat village but 112 attending tourist activities account for 31,11% population. In Ly Lao Chai, the rate is 102/ 561 Hmong people attending tourist activities account for 18.18%. Thus, the number of people who attend to directly tourist services is rather dense without those attending indirectly as makers, person who buy and sell

brocade and jewelry.

Though questionnaire, there are till 55/60 households attending tourist service activities account for 91,67 population rate. The number of households attending tourist services activities have high income. By analyzing questionnaire, we have following data.

*Table 2: The income of households attending tourism activities in Cat Cat and Ly Lao Chai*

Order number	Income level/year (unit: million VND)	Number of households	%
1	Income without tourism	5	8,3
2	3 — 5.5	21	35
3	5.6 — 10	30	50
4	More than 10	4	6,7

<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>
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Total average income per one Hmong household growing rice per year is from 8 to 10 millions but at least 10 — 16 millions for households attending tourist activities. Thus, these households attending tourism have higher income from 2 to 2,5 times compared with poor farming households, in some cases, income is from 3 to 4 times.

### ***1.2. Tourism have impacts on family styles***

The number of Hmong families in Sapa in early 1970s of 20<sup>th</sup> century were extended patriarchy families means having more than 3 generations accounted for rather high rate.

According to investigate data in Ly Lao Chai village, Lao Chai commune, Sapa district, 23/44 households are extended families (consist of at least two generations or many married couples live together in the same house), only 21/44 households account for 47,7% are nuclear

families (one married couple and their unmarried children). In Cat Cat village, San San Ho commune, 18/28 households are three generation families and extended nuclear families account for 63,3 %. The nuclear families are 45,7%. There are still some great families (30 — 40 people) in Sapa.

Nowadays, Hmong families in Sapa are mainly nuclear families. In Hau Thao commune, 245/296 households are nuclear families, only 41 households (account for 16,13%) are extended families.

In the total of 60 households in Cat Cat, Ly Lao Chai, the ratio of two generation families is rather high.

**Table 3: The number of generations in families.**

<b>Village</b>	<b>2 generations</b>	<b>3 generations</b>	<b>3 open generations</b>	<b>1 generation</b>	<b>Total</b>
Cat Cat	37	18	5	0	60
Ly Lao Chai	21	7	1	1	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>90</b>

Thus, the number of nuclear families expands rapidly in Ly Lao Chai account for 66,44%, this figure in Cat Cat is 61,67%. The important thing is that most of member in extended families want to separate household (there are 20/ 23 households interviewed they all have same idea) to develop economy. 26/30 households in Cat Cat accounted for 86,67% have the same above idea. The main cause leading to household separation and nuclear families are changing economic conditions. The family is an economic unit. Doing the farming work needs much of labour in milpa economy, and thus, these crowded families will have higher income. Today, with

changing economic structure, services bring higher income for these households without much of labour. The families with a ship shop or motorbike - taxi driver will get higher income from 1,5 to 2 times compared with poor farming families. Some extended households (some married couples live together) have tendency of semi — dependent economy. These families only have shared work and farm products together but they have own income from making and selling brocade, doing motorbike taxi and ship shop □to prepare housing material, separate life.

### 1.3 Tourism have impacts on family relations and the role of members

Tourism generates a score of new jobs, which change relations among family members.

In traditional family, in agricultural economy, the role of husband, head of a nuclear family is highly appreciated.

In terms of working division, the husband is supposed to take over all hard jobs such as farming work including cultivating, ploughing, harvesting and creating terraced fields; forging and knitting, etc. In a nuclear family, ploughing which is carried out by the husband is indispensable. Therefore, the role of husband is far more crucial, whereas, women have less chances to discuss of making decision on important issues. In the family, the husband has decisive ideas on building new house, selling

horses, arranging marriages, welcoming guests and keeping money. However, nowadays, quite a few women engage in service sector. According to survey statistics of 60 households, there are 46 wives and 9 daughters with rather high income involving in wearing or peddling. Women who work as tourist guides can earn a sum of money ranging from VND 600,000 to VND 800,000 per month. Besides, women engaging in cloth wearing and vending gain between VND 400,000 and VND 600,000 every month. A woman in tourism service sector has an equal or even higher income than that of the whole family working in agricultural sector. As a result, the role of women in family is enhance. Tourism greatly contributes to equity between men and women. Results of survey questionnaires show that decisions on almost important issues are made by both husband and wife.

Table 4: The role of family members

Members	Decision on building a new house		Decision on arranging marriage for children	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Husband	16	26.4	8	13.3
Wife	2	3.3	5	8.3
Both	39	65.3	23	38.3
Other	2	3.3	13	21.67
No answer	1	1.7	11	18.33
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>

There appears a dramatic change in Hmong people's families. The percentage of both husband and wife making decisions on building a new house and arranging marriage for children accounts for 65.3% and 38.3% respectively. Especially, the number of wives has decisive ideas in family issues. However, this rate

remains low in nuclear family only, it signifies that the role of women is gradually strengthened.

Formerly, in Hmong people's family, husband is money keeper. At present, some wives become money keeper of the families or the common trend is that both husband and wife have their own money and keep money.

Table 5: The money – keeping of family members

Money keeper	Frequency	Percentage
Husband	26	43.3
Wife	7	11.7
Both	24	40.5

Others	3	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>

In the past, in a traditional society, the wife was supposed to fully fulfill housework, husband and children caring. Nowadays, the wife also takes part in social activities. Women in Cat Cat village attending hamlet - meetings and welcoming guests account for 10% and 37% respectively. About 75% of them have talks with their husbands on emerging public issues. In fact, Hmong women engaging in tourism activities can improve their communication and broader their knowledge. They escape from the stuffy atmosphere in families step by step and involve themselves in the open one of the society.

Relations between parents and children in Hmong families have changed. In extended family, in case parents are busy with social work, grandparents will take care and upbringing their offspring.

Nowadays, since the rapid decrease of extended family occurred, parents can hardly take care of their children. Worse still, children are taken less care from their parents when their mothers not only have to do farming work but also buy and sell souvenirs. In Cat Cat village, their mothers have to work from dawn to dusk, they even have to rest in the town in several weeks. Thus, children lack care and affection. They are busy with doing housework and involving themselves in tourism services (instead of going home, they follow their mother from Friday afternoon to Monday). As a result, their learning quality remains very low. Many pupils at grade 3 or 4 can hardly read and write perfectly. At present, there are nearly 250 children, mainly girls, wandering and peddling on the streets in Sapa. Out of those, 100 children quite school very early. After finishing primary education, many children tend to leave school. In 2003, among 16 pupils finished grade 5, there are only five ones continue learning in Ly Cao Chai village. The number of student left school in an attempt of joining tourism services

accounts for 51,7%. This rate in Cat Cat village is at 63,33%.

## 2. Impacts of tourism to relations on extended family

In traditional society of Hmong people, lineage relations were highly appreciated. But now, under the impacts of tourism, there are some changes in this relations. Firstly, the role of head of a lineage "Ho Phau" has a lot of changes. In the past, the head of a lineage had to be the oldest who has experience and high responsibility with his lineage. Now, the new generations are good at working, adopting themselves to tourism sector and attending tourist services (Motorbike - taxi driver, tourist guide). They have economic conditions and help some poor numbers of lineage so they have respects in lineage's general works. Thus, when choosing head of a lineage, members of lineage emphasize these person who is good at doing tourism with high income.

In the past, when there were great works in family as building houses, getting married, doing terraced fields, disputing land..., householder used to ask head of a lineage. Now, only 21.7% members of lineage asking idea of head of a lineage and 46.7 % householders deciding great works.

The heads of a lineage used to have advices in some life's aspects as funeral, marriage, productions, social behaviors and great works in the family. Now, understanding economy of head of a lineage is limited. There has been some heads of a lineage having knowledge about tourism services. In questionnaire, 90% questioned people showed that these great works as marriage, funeral, building new houses...need to ask the head of a lineage's idea. Only 26% ask the head of a lineage's idea for borrowing money, opening shift shops, doing terraced fields.

The economic assistance among members of lineage is limited and not voluntary as used to, especially, in some cases, only limited in flesh-and blood relations. Now, there have been more contradictions, conflicts, disunity among member due to strong competitions about customers and business. However, forms of assistance among members have changed deeply, as for they assist together in money but not in kind as used to (66,7 % compared with 3%). Social and faith relations in lineage are still remarkable. Main rites of member family as weddings and funeral, house building still attract most of line's members in spite of having economic contradictions. Thus, the lineage consolidation in belief, social relations is more outstanding than in economy. Economic cooperation and assistance are reduced and limited in flesh-and blood relations.

### 3. Impacts of tourism to community relations

Tourism has influence on community relations in some aspects as economy, culture, social relations. In agriculture society, the role of village patriarchs are highly appreciated. They have played a decision roles in some community relations as emigrating, selecting head of village, organizing general rites. But, the position and significance of village patriarchs are not highly appreciated as used to because they don't have conditions approaching update, new information, selling experience, new seed. Thus, all above works are taken charge by new generations.

The roles of village patriarchs in tourism village is reduced remarkable and the young rely ask their idea. In general meeting, deciding these works as investment in production, building roads, co-operatives adorning brocade. Heads of the village (as householders) rely ask village patriarchs' idea. In Cat Cat, Sin Chai, Ly Lao Chai, Lo Hang Chai... in Sapa town, they only ask village patriarchs' ideal about cultural lifestyle, beliefs, rely on economy.

In contrast of village patriarchs' role, Heads of village have higher opinions. Hmong villages in agriculture society were peaceful, closed.

Every year, there used to be one general meeting on "Thin" day, January for "Nao Xong" festival to review, approve village's affairs and general conventions. Now, that peace become broken, these affairs as building tourist village, inter-village roads, afforesting, making produce and service groups need more management of heads and attendance of people. The Heads have to organize general meetings to discuss these affairs or take part in project programs. The heads usually examine and supervise member families carrying out village affairs, implementing general conventions, reprogramming shop, restoring craft industry, organizing art performances. The functions, duties and roles of the heads become more complex, highly appreciated, so criterions for position of the heads is rather different. The heads of village need to be person who have academic standards, dynamism, ability receiving and informing information. The speed of life happened strongly so these elderly and rich experience criterions are not importance for positions of heads. There are tendency bringing new blood in to positions of heads.

These tourism villages are different from traditional villages in organizing labor. First, these groups as making brocades, doing motorbike - taxi driver, growing flowers formed spontaneously, but, under competitive pressure, the need of invested and financed capital as well as products selling, they have formed formal organizations as embellishing brocades in Cat Cat, Ta Phin, growing flowers in Ma Cha village, guiding tourist in Cat Cat, performing letters and arts in Cat Cat, Sin Chai... These organizations make village's institutions become abundant. The operation of these organizations in one Hmong village is both complex and positive issues for village institutions. community relations at economy, culture and society are enhanced.

By studying about tourism in Sapa, we have seen a lot of institutions issues. Tourism bring positive and negative aspects. In one hand, tourism created new income, new jobs, new

organizations and improves standard of living, but other hand, tourism has negative impacts for society as foundling, uneducated children in Hmong families, specially traditional structure of village has changed dramatically. With this studies, we offers some petitions as following: Building some policies and measures of social management in Hmong people; Having a training and using plan for heads of villages; Making regulations of income and expenditure for Hmong tourist villages; Orienting stable and anti — commercialized tourism.