

# A Study of Tourism Potential in Battambang Province, Cambodia

<sup>1</sup>Mr. Mun Bora, <sup>2</sup>Dr. Vijit Supinit

<sup>1,2</sup>MBA, Siam University

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**Abstract:** The Cambodian tourism has major potential for creating jobs, earning foreign exchange, generating incomes and augmenting government revenues. In the short and medium terms, the major centres of tourist destination were perceived as being Phnom Penh, Siem Reap (Angkor), Battambang province and the Sihanoukville coastal region and, in the long term, with some of the more remote parts of the country being opened up for ecotourism and special interests.

Battambang, located in northwestern Cambodia, contains the second most populous city in the country after Phnom Penh. The provincial capital, also Battambang, has always been a popular destination for its nearby ancient temples, French colonial architecture, and Buddhist shrines. Sitting on the Sangker River just south west of the Tonle Sap Lake, Battambang town is at the heart of Cambodia's 'rice bowl', and it maintains an untouched, bucolic feel. The streets are filled with remarkably well-preserved French colonial buildings alongside traditional Cambodian houses. The nearby countryside harbors old pagodas, Angkorian era ruins, caves, waterfalls, and Khmer Rouge period killing fields. Places of interest include Phnom Sampeu, a hill with caves of Buddha statues; the 12th Century Prasat Snung, Wat Banan, an Angkorian temple now occupied as a Buddhist shrine; Wat Baydamram where thousands of fruit bats reside, and Wat Ek Phnom.

As the consequences of the research in tourism potential in Battambang province we found that, most of the visitors beside local people are Vietnamese, Thai and Japanese and 54% of them are male among 100% with 125 frequencies. Similarly, many of national and international tourists hold bachelor's degree and high school student due to our survey, and we also found that a lot of them are self-employ. On came the interest of travellers, so in the data of the survey we can figure out that tourists who visited Battambang province mostly with tour package and family trip by using bus or own vehicle with the main purpose of leisure and business in the intention on cultural places. In addition, travellers spent around four days for visiting the province and prefer hotel to guesthouse.

In order to improve more on tourism sector government plays a really important role to develop, improve and enhance the tourism sector such as develop the infrastructure, human resource, promote and advertise the tourism service, health care improvement, motivate people to focus more on tourism. Moreover, local people and tourist are also concern in this improvement by taking of environment with waste management system, local people should tell or share their own knowledge to tourist who did not follow the instruction of the resorts, local people should join the campaign with the government in order to follow the slogan of "clean city, clean resort, good service". In conclusion, tourism sector can be developed and improved depends on the participation from all of the institutions including people from all levels because tourism sector is the part of system, which require intrapersonal communication.

**Keywords:** potential, tourism, tourist destination, most popular, intention, tour package.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Cambodia has been known as Golden Land since the first born of Nakhon Phnom Era, Who was ambassador of ancient China recorded all described the great civilization of the natural treasures properties several methods that have been left behind at present. Precious priceless heritage still offers the same reputation of our motherland despite slow moral culture and some negative culture through a number of factors that lead to actions such as war, almost all centuries and acceptance factors influence some bad culture from abroad.

Separately, during this modern society based on the political principles of the Royal Government of Cambodia has been inspired to study all fields to contribute to the development of the country as well as international show on the whole world to know the reality of this once prosperous realm. While the country is making progress on behalf of us, I, a student of hotel management and tourism, also choose a topic titled “The Study of Tourism Potential of Battambang Province”. We took to research and show people recognize from some tourist areas in Battambang province such as, natural resources, artificial resources, cultural resources and history.



Source: World Travel and Tourism Council, *Travel and Tourism Economic impact 2015, Cambodia*

**Figure of Visitor Exports and International Tourist Arrivals 2005-2015**

Visitor exports are the main component of direct contribution of tourism in Cambodia as well as in the world. Money spent by foreign visitors to a country (or visitor exports) is a key component of the direct contribution of Travel & Tourism. In 2014, Cambodia generated KHR12,925.9bn in visitor exports.

In 2015, this is expected to grow by 8.3%, and the country is expected to attract 4,712,000 international tourist arrivals. By 2025, international tourist arrivals are forecast to total 7,134,000, generating expenditure of KHR24,970.2bn, an increase of 6.0% pa. (*www.wtt.org*)

**OBJECTIVE OF STUDY:**

Due to Battambang province is one of the famous province in the Kingdom of Cambodia, so I am please to select this topic, which titled “The Study of Tourism Potential in Battambang Province” to describe in this study. The study focuses on some main objectives, which will be mentioned as follow:

- 1- General situation of Battambang province
- 2- Tourism Market in Battambang province
- 3- Attract resources
- 4- Infrastructure
- 5- Population factors
- 6- Tourism development in Battambang province

**BENEFIT OF STUDY:**

The study of tourism potential in Battambang province will provide the critical benefits as follow,

- To show the tourism potential in Battambang province
- To promote the natural resorts to local and international visitors
- To see the weaknesses of the previous tourism plan and development
- Depends on the results of the research we will use it to develop tourism sector in order to strengthen the tourism products for supplying the demand of tourists.

- To provide the specific documents and statistics for investors, who would like to research or invest on natural resorts in Cambodia.
- Contribute to the evaluation on strengths and weaknesses of the tourism areas in Battambang province to simplify the arrangement for develop some gaps.
- This research study will be kept for the next researchers especially, for other students or for those who would like to learn about tourism in Battambang province.

#### EXPECTED OUTCOME:

The outcomes of the study would be useful information to enhance tourism development in better ways and develop effective increase the number of tourists and revenue. Moreover, it could be helpful data for tourism stakeholders to predict tourists' behavior regarding their attitudes and opinions. In addition, this study could be also beneficial information for further tourism and attitude research in the future.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Battambang is located in the northwest of the Kingdom and it is well known for being the leading rice-producing province. It is the main hub connecting to the northwest region with Phnom Penh and Thailand. According to the results of the 2011 Economic Census, the total number of establishments of Battambang indicated 34, 097 while the total number of persons engaged showed 84,790 persons. It accounts for 6.8% of the total number of establishments in Cambodia (505,134 establishments) and for 5.1% of the total number of person engaged (1,673,390 persons) in the Kingdom of Cambodia. Furthermore, the results of the 2011 Economic Census disclosed that the total amount of annual sales in Battambang presented 576 million US dollars while that of annual expenses in the province indicated 466 million US dollars. The former accounted for 4.5% of the total amount of annual sales while the latter for 4.2% of the total amount of annual expenses in the Kingdom.. ([www.mot.gov.kh](http://www.mot.gov.kh))

Table of Tourism Receipts and Average Length of Stay 1993 – 2015

Tourism Highlights					
International Tourist Arrivals, Average Length of Stays, Hotel Occupancy & Tourism Receipts 1993 - 2015					
Years	Int'l Tourist Arrivals		Average Length	Hotel Occupancy	Tourism Receipts
	Number	Change (%)	of Stays (Days)	(%)	(Million US\$)
1993	118,183	-	N/A	N/A	N/A
1994	176,617	49.4	N/A	N/A	N/A
1995	219,680	24.4	8.00	37.0	100
1996	260,489	18.6	7.50	40.0	118
1997	218,843	-16.0	6.40	30.0	103
1998	286,524	30.9	5.20	40.0	166
1999	367,743	28.3	5.50	44.0	190
2000	466,365	26.8	5.50	45.0	228
2001	604,919	29.7	5.50	48.0	304
2002	786,524	30.0	5.80	50.0	379
2003	701,014	-10.9	5.50	50.0	347
2004	1,055,202	50.5	6.30	52.0	578
2005	1,421,615	34.7	6.30	52.0	832
2006	1,700,041	19.6	6.50	54.8	1,049
2007	2,015,128	18.5	6.50	54.8	1,400
2008	2,125,465	5.5	6.65	62.7	1,595
2009	2,161,577	1.7	6.45	63.6	1,561
2010	2,508,289	16.0	6.45	65.7	1,786
2011	2,881,862	14.9	6.50	66.2	1,912
2012	3,584,307	24.4	6.30	68.5	2,210
2013	4,210,165	17.5	6.75	69.5	2,547
2014	4,502,775	7.0	6.50	67.6	2,736
2015	4,775,231	6.1	6.80	70.2	3,012

Source: Tourism Statistic Report 2015, MOT

**INFRASTRUCTURE AND TOURISM SERVICE:**

This study will focus on all services in tourism sector including hotels, guesthouses, transports, tour guides, tour operators, and etc. on this approaches of a key factor for the hotel in Battambang province is global marketing and accessibility in opportunity. The vast majority of tourists staying in Battambang is either part of a package holiday or has booked through travel and tour operators, with this characteristic being markedly true for the Asian Market. As such, international hotel operators with increased exposure and presence with travel and tour operators have been able to directly convert the increased number of tourists into higher occupancy rates.. (Soun Rany, 2009)

The number and quality of hotels and guesthouses in Battambang province have escalated considerably in the last few years with several international hotel brands now joining small guesthouses and local hotels in the major tourist areas. Some established hotels in Battambang are now complemented by international brands. Many local hotels have also upgraded themselves and expanded to meet the challenges and demands. A few of these local hotels are now offering five-star standards; some with decors and facilities to put their internationally branded cousins on their heels. Due to Battambang’s past connections with France, it is not surprising to find some colonial style hotels as well. There were totally 26 hotels, with 1,216 rooms; in that there were 7 hotels were ranged. Guesthouse totally was 26, with 538 rooms, and there were 46 restaurants, travel agencies and tour-operators are 2, and many licensed guides. For leisure activities refer to bar and pub in the province and totally it has 5 bars and pubs and 16 karaoke bars. ([www.tourismcambodia.org](http://www.tourismcambodia.org))

**Table of Accommodation, Restaurant and other Categories in Battambang**

Details	No.-	Capacity
Hotel	26 hotels	1,216 rooms
Guesthouse	26 guesthouses	538 rooms
Restaurant	46 restaurants	-
Bar and pub	5 bars and pubs	-
Karaoke bar	16 karaoke bars	-

There are three ways for traveling to Cambodia for tourist arrivals, by air, by land and waterway. By air is a popular way for international tourists to come; there are two International airports for serving them, Phnom Penh International Airport and Siem Reap Angkor International Airport. Both airports are quite modern. The Phnom International Airport serves well over a million passengers annually with a capacity for two million. There are 22 check-in counters and 6 gates, serving 10 international and 3 domestic destinations with 20 airlines. ([www.cambodia-tourism.org](http://www.cambodia-tourism.org))

**Table of International Tourist Arrivals to Cambodia 2014**

Year/Arrivals	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Airway	1,304,300	1,480,407	1,722,083	2,017,658	2,273,493
Land & Waterway	1,094,599	1,401,455	1,186,224	2,192,507	2,229,282
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,508,289</b>	<b>2,881,862</b>	<b>3,584,307</b>	<b>4,210,165</b>	<b>4,502,775</b>

Source: Statistic Report 2014, MOT

Telecommunication factor is an essential factor for spreading news and it helps local people to communicate with each other from one place to another and from one country to other countries in the purpose of business, or greeting. Recently, telecommunication connects people even faster due to high development of world technology, they have used scientific tools which, lead to connecting people everywhere and every time. In Battambang province as we can see there are all telecom companies available including Mobitel, Camshin, Samart, Camintel, Tango, Qb, Beeline, Metfone, Smart, and Internet that play an important role for local residence to have fast communication inside the province and also outside.

**Table of Mobile Network in Cambodia**

Network	Company
Mobitel	CamGSM Co., Ltd
CooTel	Xinwei (Cambodia) Telecom Co., Ltd
SEATEL	South East Asia Telecom (Cambodia) Co., Ltd
Metfone	Viettel (Cambodia) Pte., Ltd
qb	Cambodia Advance Communication Co., Ltd (CADCOMMS)
Smart	Smart Axiata Co., Ltd

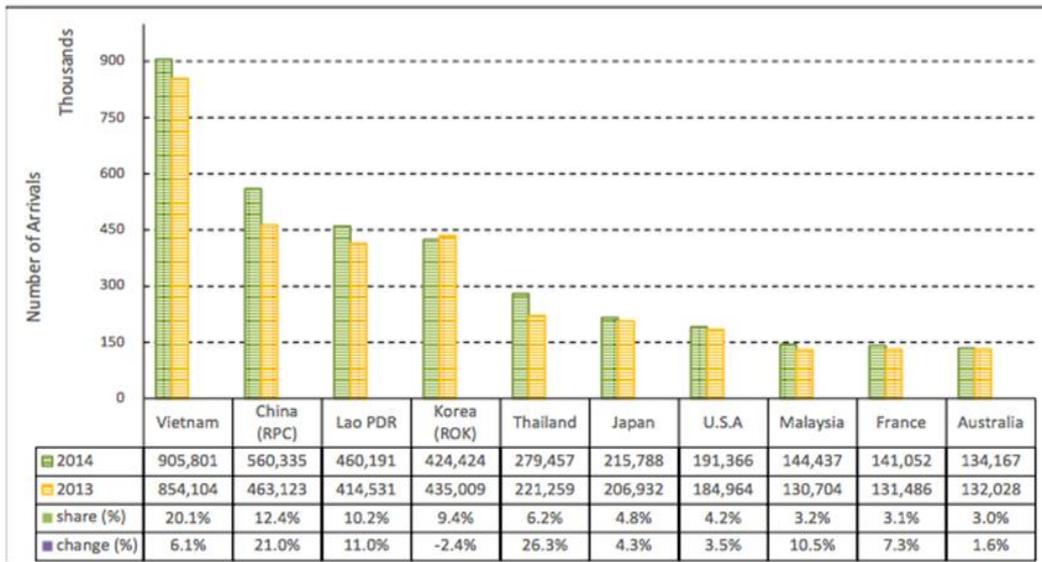
Source: Wikipedia

In Cambodia nowadays, the most popular mobile network company among middle age people is Mobitel and follow by Smart and Metfone Company.

**TOURISM MARKET:**

This study focuses on both domestic tourist and foreign tourist, they are very important for the Cambodian economy in several ways. Local people on day excursions open up new areas to tourists, local and domestic, who follow. They are the ones who "discover" new destinations, such as waterfalls and caves, and make them accessible to those who follow. A year-to-year, Cambodia received international tourists visited temples, natural zones cultural lifestyle and historical sites, waterfall, beaches. And tourism resorts located in some provinces such as Phnom Penh capital, Sihanouk Ville, Kep Ville, Kompot, Siem Reap, Kratei, Ratanakiri, Mondalkiri, and others destinations are increased number of tourists remarkable, especially Battambang province, which has many natural and historical resorts. Here below table show the number of international tourist arrivals in previous year. (Va Siheng, 2006)

**Top Ten Markets Arrivals in 2014**



Source: Statistic Report 2014, MOT

Based on the above table, international tourist arrivals to Cambodia, mostly they come from its neighboring countries like Vietnam, Thailand, Lao, Taiwan, and Malaysia, etc. from Asian countries, China, Japan, Korea, and others, and from previous continents like as U.S.A, U.K, Australia, Russia. Among of these countries, Vietnam stands on highest range, is 854,104 tourists with in change 6% in this year 2014 compared to the year 2013, China is second range, and followed by the countries, Laos PDR, Korea, Thailand, Japan, U.S.A, and others. But there are some countries missing trend by the previous year. On the other hand, Korea dropped from second range to forth range in 2014 and Laos jumped from eleventh range in the list to top three arrivals to Cambodia. The below figure will summarize about number of tourists visiting Siem Reap in 2010 and 2011.

**Table of Tourist arrivals to Top Destination in 2015**

Tourism Locations	Number of arrivals
Phnom Penh	1,090,327
Battambang	836,377
Siem Reap	1,487,213

Source: Statistic from Tourism Ministry

Based on the above table, it demonstrates that the top three destinations in Cambodia that Siem Reap province stands on the top, which attracts 1,487,213 tourists both local and international tourists in 2015 and follow by Phnom Penh the capital city of Cambodia that received 1,090,327 in 2015, another famous destination in Cambodia where can receive almost one million tourists is Battambang province, this province got 836,377 visitors in 2015 and most of the tourist travel there by bus, own vehicle and boat.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

This survey was conducted for collecting the preliminary data. It was a necessary phase to inform and to discuss the detailed research study with friends especially Prof. Dr. Vijit, a Dean of Master of Business Administration in Siam University. Deeply discussion was held with both local and foreign tourists to complete the research' purpose. The secondary data also was collected during this phase as much as we could. Basically, the result from this survey was used for basic understanding, developing the qualitative research tools and questionnaire. Most of the research time was spent on during of the period. Qualitative and quantitative approaches were applied. Qualitative data was collected before interviewing tourists. Synthesis information had been completed after discussions in sufficient time. Quantitative data collecting was conducted immediately after the questionnaire was revised. Generally, all outputs from the survey were used for evidence in study research.

The data is to proceed with literature and respondent's data are relied on quantity methods. In order to ensure the quality of data analysis, the quality controllers during data processing checked and edited data from the questionnaires. After completing data entry, data cleaning was conducted to check any errors or inconsistencies in the database so that it would not bias the result analysis.

**DATA SOURCE:**

At least, there are two sources of data are primary and secondary data. Primary data sources focus on interviews with Officials of Tourism Department in the province, Tourism Information Office and local people, survey papers, direct observation, and participant-observation. Secondary data sources mainly covered government publications, technical document, annual reports, and other ways. Secondary data sources rely on the documents from Tourism Department, Tourism Information Office and some other sources received from foreign and Khmer scholars via books, and Internet including some of national and international reports helped to check official information learn about major events, technical detail, and main organizational player and roles. They also supported the exploring of particular responses during interviews. Additionally, all data was collected through an initial survey was served to gather demographic information as well as lay the foundation for the interviews. Interviews with individual participants were conducted through on the hands.

**DATA COLLECTION:**

Questions were mailed in November 28th to 30th, 2015. We spent three days for collecting papers. First day, I was in Natural Resorts and Cultural of Sampouv Mountain and Buddha Mountain, there were 57 respondents. Second day, in Banon temple and Cultural Village there were 48 respondents, and the third day we moved to Battambang Province Museum, which had 20 respondents. A total of 145 surveys were sent out to tourists collected during three days in five destinations.

The surveys were conducted at sites commonly frequented by both national and international tourist. The five destination sites collected 125 respondents and other 20 non-respondents are through on the ground. Here following table shows five destination sites were conducted on the way.

**Table of Specific Destinations**

No	Destinations	No. of tourists	Percentage
01	Sampouv Mountain	27	22%
02	Buddha Mountain	30	24%
03	Banon Temple	15	12%
04	Cultural Village	33	26%
05	Battambang Province Museum	20	16%
<b>Total</b>		<b>125</b>	<b>100%</b>

**DATA ANALYSIS:**

Exactly, after collecting qualitative data, we synthesized information immediately after friend discussion for checking and controlling the data. All results and synthesis paper were arranged in files carefully. And then, we listed all relevant data from each tool. Also, we interpreted all information regarding to our research questions.

All questionnaires were given a code number. All of them were punched into the files strictly after we checked already, and then we input all the variables into Statistic Package for Social Science v20.0 (SPSS v20.0) application for analyzing. We analyzed data by using frequency, and descriptive tools for description of data.

The total sample sizes of 125 respondents from people at the age of 18 and over. The 125 samples are represented 0.02% of the total 836,377 tourists arrivals to Battambang province destination sites in 2015. With 31% of the total sample sizes are allocated for domestic tourist and 69% of foreign tourists from other countries.

#### **4. RESEARCH AND FINDINGS**

This point will focus on the finding of the study in which summarized the data gathered will be presented and describing due to the percentage in a descriptive analysis. This study has been divided into two parts in this survey that we focused on demographics and in the interest of tourists in travel. Demographic, we concerned about nationality of visitors, age, sex, average income, material status, education level, present occupation, and part two will talk about interest of travellers that refers to type of transportation, type of travelling, main purpose, main interest, accommodation, etc.

After we collected data from the survey, it was transferred on to computer program for analyzing data found out the result of number of both tourists. Mostly we received the respondents from foreign tourist, which was about 69%, and there are from, Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, China, Japan, and Korea, USA, France, Australia, Russia and other in the total of 125. In the respondents there were 54% of male and 45% of female and the age ranges are 23 to 28 is 25% followed by 36 to 41 and 48 to 55+ has only 10% regard as the lowest.

Another respondents illustrate about education level that 46% of visitor are holding bachelor's degree and 31% are high school students end up with 23% of them hold master's degree, the next result of average income from our surveys, visitors of 25% are in \$351-\$450 salary range, followed by the range of \$251-\$350 or 22% and lowest is \$650-\$750+ that has only 9%. Moreover, the respondent of present occupation shows that, 38% of tourists are doing their own business, 26% are students, another 20% and 16% are government official and private business employee.

Part two will show about tourists who have come to visit Battambang province by conducting the interview in the topic of type of travellers, the first respondent is about type of travelling and we can see the result that 36% of them came to visit with tour company by buying tour package and another 31% came with family follow by 19% travel with friends and the last 14% travel alone, the second respondent is about transportation and it was divided into three types 46% travelled by bus or car (from Thailand, Laos and Vietnam), and 41% by airplane, another 13% or 16 sample size travelled by waterway along the river in the province. The third respondent is about main purpose of travel which shows 38% the highest percentage of visitors travelled for leisure activity, 28% or 35 sample size of tourists travelled for business, and 19% of them travelled in purpose of study or research, only 15% travelled for meeting. The main interest of visitors is 33% travel to visit cultural tourism where is the most popular tourism site in Battambang province, 30% interested in visiting historical tourism sites which refers to ancient temple, pagoda, caves, another 22% travel to see eco-tourism that is the preservation stage from government and we hope that eco-tourism will attract more tourist in the next couple of years, the last 15% visit modern tourism because they would like to see the development of Cambodia in the recent year. On the other hand, as we can see from our analyses, most of them prefer hotel to guesthouse because we got 47% stay in the hotel and 36% stay in the guesthouse, the last 17% would choose others of accommodation it refers to apartment, condo, friends' home, homestay and etc. Battambang province have been developed year by year so there many foreign brands of hotel invested in this province in order to provide tourism service. So then 38% of the tourist would choose to stay in the province for around four days, 33% will stay around three days, 17% for only two days and the last 12% choose to stay more than four days, and it means that the most of them are travelling by tour package or individual trip with their family but we can see the development and improvement of the province with security and tourism service so the province can guarantee the security and safety of visitors 100%. The last respondent would rate about tourism service from Department of Tourism in the province, local people, and tourism sites, then we can see that 45% rate the good service, 34% rate the very good service and the last 21% wanted the tourism service to improve more on the service.

In the mater of fact, the successful factor that can help to develop, improve and enhance the tourism sector in Battambang to get better than recent time and to attract more visitors due to the rich of natural resort and historical resorts. In the result of the survey most of people came to Battambang province in the their leisure activity so then we can see the development of accommodations are being constructed in order to join the tourism service in Cambodia, Battambang will stand out in

the most popular destination site in Cambodia in the future. In 2015 there are 26 hotels with 1,216 rooms, 26 guesthouses and 538 rooms, 46 restaurants and another 21 bars, pubs and karaoke bar.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

This study is willing to find out the potential tourism in Battambang province and the attitude of local and international tourists, and to determine the activities of both domestic and foreign group of tourist growth. On the other hand, the most of the tourism services has been developed more and more due to the attention of the Department of Tourism by trying to establish education program in order to train the trainees every year because it would help to promote the tourism service in the province to get more attractiveness.

As to the attitude of tourists, it found both national and international visitors contributed in order to encourage and motivate this sectors in means develop and maintain the world's culture properties as previous countries around the world. Moreover, the sample sizes are derived from a non-probability selection method. Therefore, the results can be best used specifically for measuring the level of awareness of the activities and to take corrective measure toward the survey.

Battambang province, which has the potential good tourism and east to improve and develop in the future in order to turned into an option after another famous tourism site Siem reap province, if there is more development. Depends on analysis on the tourism resources in Battambang province, the richest resource is natural resource, which full of forest, wildlife, mountain, caves. The conservation of heritage and culture remains is important to attract tourists while natural parks need to be developed and maintained. Cambodia tourism can also increase its market share and image quality if the country works more closely with the neighboring countries that have culture, heritages and tourism objective in common.

On the other hand, the most tourism services have been developed more and more due to the attention of the Department of Tourism by trying to establish education program. Local people are also knowledgeable about tourism more than previous time, they have learned about the benefits of tourism sectors, and creative ideas so these activities will dedicate to poverty reduction in the own family. To safeguard the sound future development of tourism in Battambang destination, Cambodia it is essential that the local residents should be integrated into all programs and that their social and economic welfare improve alongside increasing tourist activity,

## **6. RECOMMENDATION**

After research, and concluded on the sources of information we can analyze that tourism sector in Battambang province has been improving to the better level and only remain few weaknesses.

So here are the step and weaknesses that government, tourism ministry and local and foreign visitors need to join in order to improve;

- Government should push up and motivate to human resource, which are involving in tourism to be more active in their work and study.
- Conservation of forest and wildlife areas by punish to those who abuse the law in term of killing wildlife or cut down the trees.
- Train and teach the tour guides to get more knowledge about information sources and the potential of tourism in the province and greeting to foreign tourists
- Construct sufficient hospitals to serve the people in the resort areas.
- Enhance the protection on all national historical resorts especially, ancient temples and pagodas, which show the Khmer identity.
- The price and quality of services provided to clients are appropriate and correct and also need to recheck regularly to avoid overcharge and below standard.
- Enhance and create more about recycling resorts because this province has less recycling resource.
- Construct and repair the road trips from the province to other resorts for national and international tourists and even for local people to travel safely.

- Enhance waste management properly especially, in some tourism site such as providing bins and signs in those areas, teach local vendors to control their waste and put it into the bin.
- Create more new promotions and tourism activities in order to attract more tourists in the low season.
- Create more advertisement via social media and television, which can broadcast to all over the world
- Installing badges direction and give instructions to tourists that are travelling in some remote areas to understand.

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