

2004

TOURISM AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF SQUIJOR PROVINCE-ISLAND, THE PHILIPPINES: SOME KEY PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

By Kohar L Chatmajian

November 2004

Abstract:

This paper studies the level of development the tourism sector in Siquijor has reached in the last decade. It identifies various problems to be solved and recognizes some negative consequences to be mitigated. Observations from and results of this study show that tourism-related activities in Siquijor were promoted through private efforts to replicate similar dynamics in other parts of the Philippines. This has been recently recognized by the provincial government. However, the whole sector of tourism in the island is still in its initial phase of development, and the lack of proper planning is seen as an urgent issue to deal with in order for them to come up with general guidelines for policy making.

To achieve the above-mentioned main goal, investigations have been performed on the system between the supply and demand sides as well as on the connection represented by **Marketing and Information Dissemination** issues. Outcomes of these investigations in available infrastructure, activities, and approaches of public and private sectors show certain weaknesses that their improvements and the provision of lacking factors are considered essential as first steps for a better future. Examination of previous trends of the demand side (visitors) gives a wide idea about their characteristics as well as their expectations, which are not yet fulfilled.

The linking component, **marketing**, is considered one of the important factors to lead the sector to success. The analysis elaborates how local marketing schemes are (un)successfully functioning in bringing information to the demand side. Results show that the degree of success does not match the given efforts as information received by visitors is often from other sources than the locally initiated ones. This relates to the inefficient marketing scheme that must be improved to yield the desired results.

The **potentiality of the demand side** to grow, **capability of supply side** to match the growing demand, consequences and **alerting situations** as well as weaknesses in **sectoral linkages** are included as significant components of this paper. They play the role of a compass to direct the whole planning concept towards alternatives for selecting the best among them. Upon these anticipations and projections of future perspectives in the growth, possibilities to match the province's ability to meet the new requirements can be studied and identified as planning factors. Anticipated positive and negative effects in financial profits, employment and spatial issues give directions of how to articulate proper planning in the above mentioned fields that can support the development and sustain it on the island.

Finally, a list of proposals defines the scopes for further planning and immediate actions that should be initiated in the near future. The paper assigns most of the actions to the provincial government, the main body that exercises regulating authority and facilitating institution to guarantee full cooperation among all stakeholders through a comprehensive planning scheme defined by a list of strategies for adoption.