

International Research Symposium: Biodiversity and Sustainable Tourism 2022

Jointly Organized by
Ministry of Environment and University of Colombo

23rd December 2022
Colombo, Sri Lanka

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



The Ministry of Environment



University of Colombo



UOC
SUSTAINABLE
TOURISM



Managing Together
Balancing Conservation & Development



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**Book of Abstracts of the International Research Symposium on
Biodiversity and Sustainable Tourism - 2022
Jointly Organized by
Ministry of Environment and University of Colombo**

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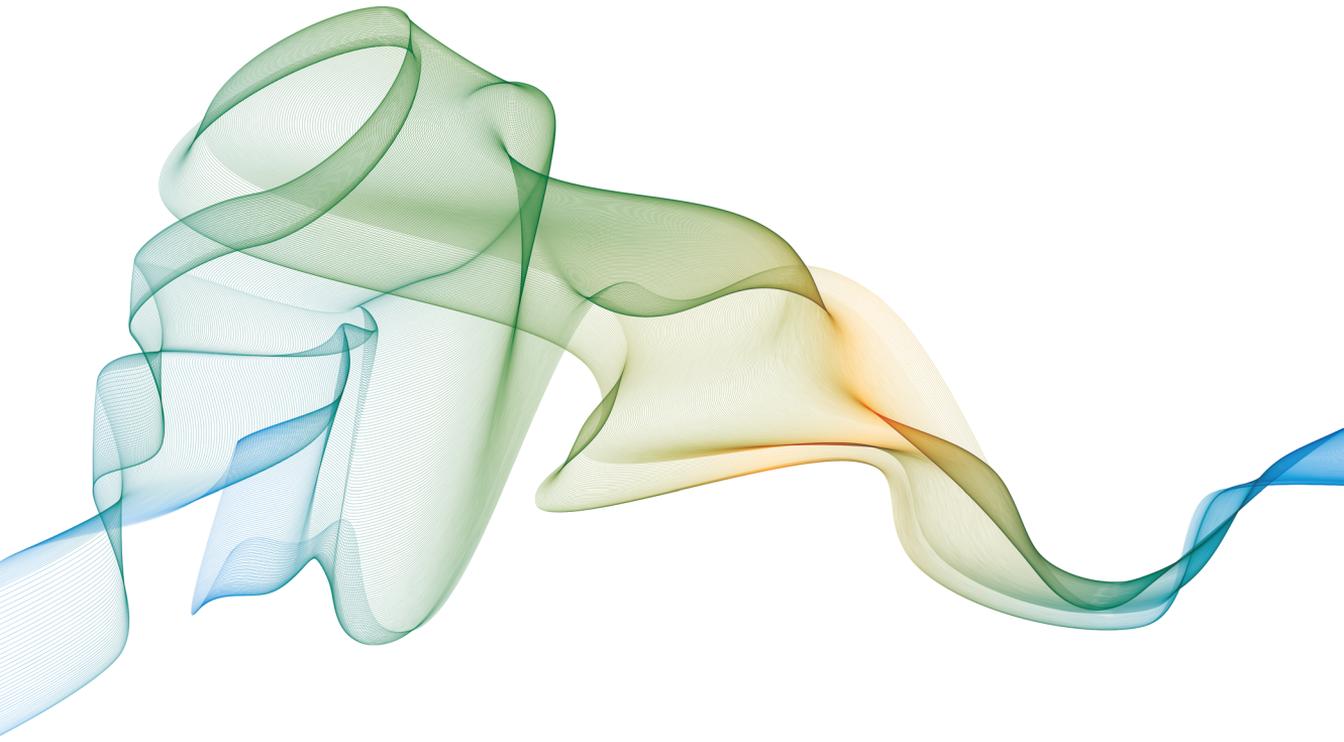
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**International Research Symposium:
Biodiversity and Sustainable Tourism
2022**

[THE BOOK OF ABSTRACTS]

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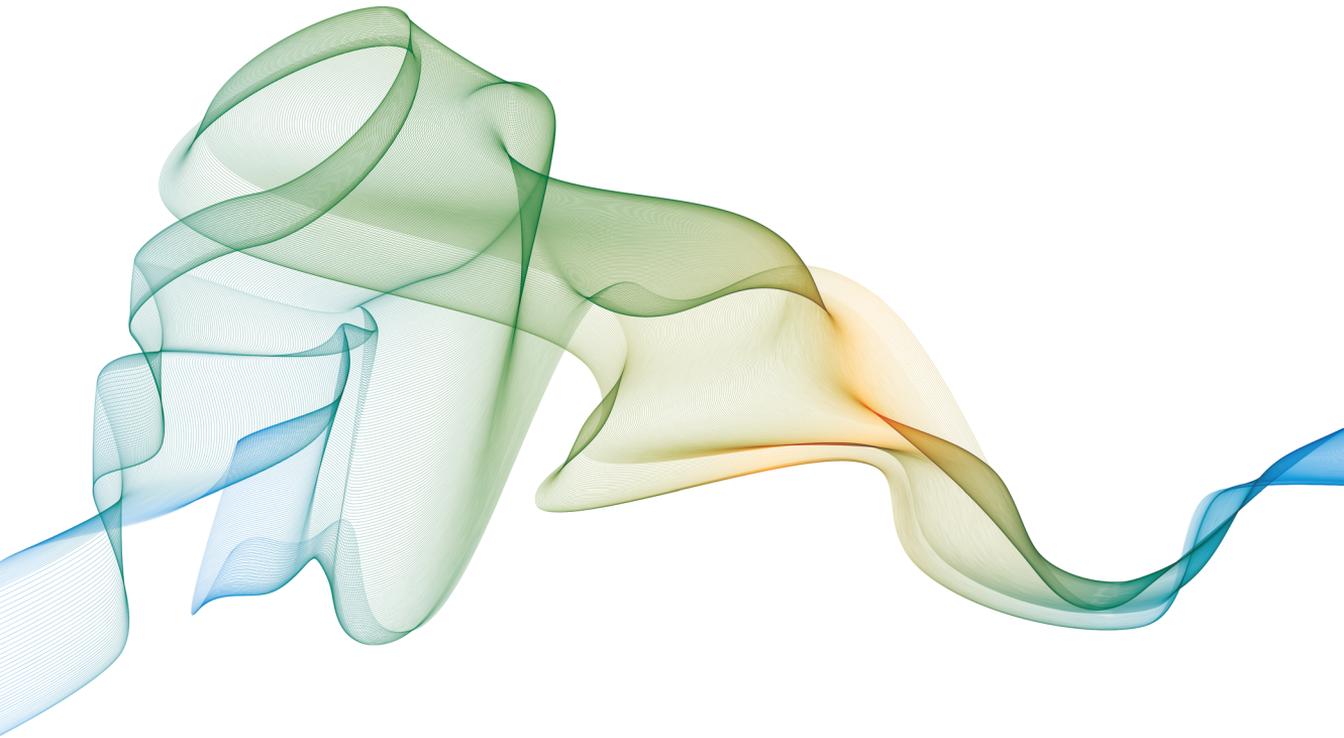
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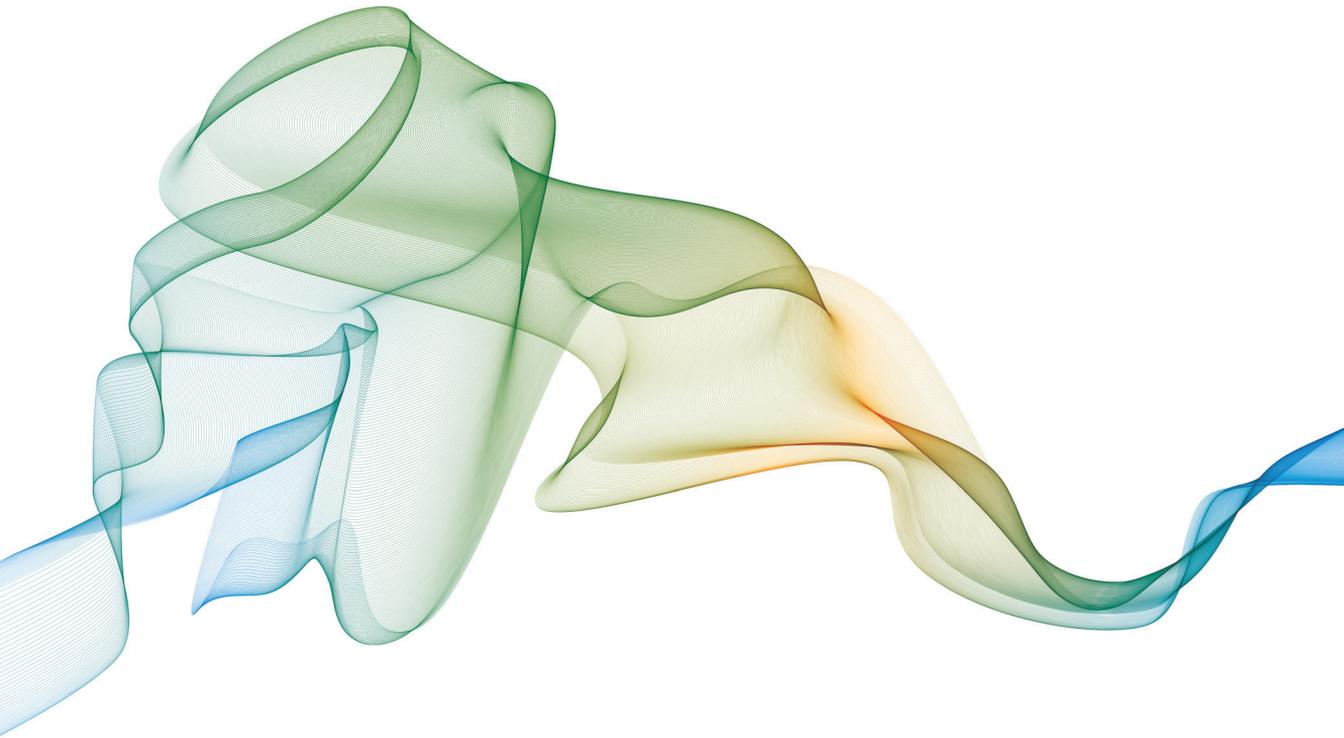


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FOREWORD



**Message from the Secretary
Ministry of Environment
Sri Lanka**

**International Symposium on Biodiversity and Sustainable
Tourism – 2022**

Sri Lanka, an island nation which occupies an enormous popularity as a famous travel destination in the world. The country holds an opulent historical heritage and culture accompanied with a natural and scenic beauty which is admired by everyone. Also, Sri Lanka, has a varied climate and topography, which has resulted in rich biodiversity. Therefore, Sri Lanka is known as a divine paradise among tourists where the country is blessed by nature from virgin mountains to shining coasts.



However, the country's most precious biological wealth has subjected to decline due to increasing harmful anthropogenic activities along with high demands for biological resources. Thus, it is essentially required to address such issues in order to preserve the natural value of the country along with an approach to sustainable development practices.

Ministry of Environment has identified the importance of the promotion of sustainable tourism and stepped to organize an International Tourism Research Conference 'Rethinking Tourism' and under the theme "Symposium on Biodiversity and Sustainable Tourism – 2022", in collaboration with university of Colombo as one of the strategies for knowledge sharing on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. This Initiative is promoting research practices in the tourism sector with the prime objective of accumulate and disseminate the evidence-based research knowledge with the best practices for biodiversity conversation and tourism sustainability. The International Symposium on Biodiversity and Sustainable Tourism- 2022 opens gateways to discover the best practices and research approaches to conserve biodiversity along with strategies to develop the sustainable tourism.

Therefore, I wish to thank University of Colombo as one of the main contributors of the symposium, and all the other stakeholders of the symposium for made this effort a success. I also thank the team of the Biodiversity Secretariat for completing this event successfully. Along with the conservation plans, best practice, research areas identified through the International Symposium on Biodiversity and Sustainable Tourism- 2022, I strongly believe the conservation of the biodiversity in Malwathu Oya basin under the project managing together will be a reality and also this effort will become an effective role model to various parties who are keen on conserving biodiversity across the country.

Dr. Anil Jasinghe
Secretary, Ministry of Environment

Message from the Vice Chancellor University of Colombo

I am delighted to forward this message for International Research Symposium and the 8th ITRC- 2022, under the core theme of “*Biodiversity and Sustainable Tourism*” jointly organized with the Ministry of Environment of Sri Lanka and University of Colombo on 23rd December 2022 in Taj Samudra Hotel, Colombo. The International Research Symposium is centered with UNWTO World Tourism Day Celebration -2022 on “Rethinking Tourism” and also with the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals.



The International Research Symposium provide rare opportunity to share the findings of industry-interaction and application-oriented research studies to create industry-policy dialogues. In addition, the case study presentations on biodiversity and the panel discussions create a great platform for all tourism stakeholders who wish to create innovative, market driven and sustainable tourism products that can take Sri Lanka Tourism to the pinnacle of global tourism. I hope that all the participants certainly be able to gain substantial evidenced-based knowledge and they will thereupon be able to contribute to gain a greater prospect to ensure the prosperous nation through sustainable tourism development of the country.

I congratulate the Officials of Ministry of Environment, Symposium Chair, Authors, Presenters, Organizers, and all academic staff, and wish them for a great success of this symposium -2022.

Senior Professor. H.D. Karunaratne
Vice Chancellor
University of Colombo

Message from the Conference Chair

It is with a great pleasure to convey this message on the **International Research Symposium and 8th ITRC on “Biodiversity and Sustainable Tourism”**, jointly organized by the Ministry of Environment & International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)-Sri Lanka together with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)-Sri Lanka and the Department of Economics, Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka on **23rd Dec 2022 at Taj Samudra Hotel-Colombo**.



Conservation of biodiversity and sustainable tourism development are greatly and positively interconnected each other under the new paradigm shift of sustainable development. Protection of biodiversity directly ensures a greater attraction of newly emerging tourists who are seeking nature-based heterogenous tourism services with their responsible behavior and consumption patterns.

Sri Lanka with its abundance of natural resources including its variety of ecosystems and amazing biodiversity has a great potential to provide many ways and opportunities for tourists to obtain memorable experience with the biodiversity-based tourism as being the highest species density for flowering plants, amphibians, reptiles and mammals in Asia.

It is with a great pleasure to highlight herewith that this symposium has created a knowledge and intellectual platform that can be used by not only budding researchers but by the decision and policy makers of the industry to direct Sri Lanka Tourism toward more resilience and sustainable tourism development. With the proper direction and guidance of Ministry of Environment, this symposium is to produce several key contributions: **(1)** Dissemination of evidenced based research findings on biodiversity and sustainable tourism; **(2)** Presentation of industry-focused case studies with best practices on biodiversity and sustainable tourism; **(3)** Creation of an industry-policy dialogue for biodiversity protection and sustainable tourism and **(4)** Provision of results-based research opportunities for Malwathu Oya River Basin and Mannar tourism development.

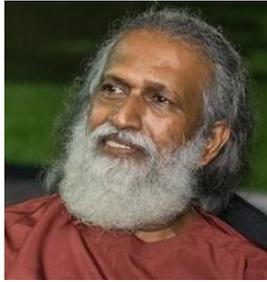
We are confident that this International Research Symposium will make a significant contribution to all industry stakeholders in designing their tourism products and services, propelling Sri Lanka Tourism to the pinnacle of global

tourism through the protection of biodiversity and ensuring sustainable tourism development. We would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to the Vice Chancellor of the University of Colombo, the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, and the Head of the Department of Economics for providing us with the academic freedom and necessary guidance to organize this research symposium. We would also like to convey our deep gratitude to the national and international panelists at this symposium, the international and local authors, industry experts and the organizing committee members. Finally, but not least, we want to express our sincere appreciation to the Ministry of Environment, IOCN and UNDP for their great guidance and financial supports as the key partners of this symposium and to make this symposium a great success.

Prof. (Dr). D.A.C Suranga Silva

Symposium Chair

Coordinator, Tourism Study Programs, Department of Economics,
Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo



Keynote Speech

Sri Lanka: The bio-diverse, ‘Wonder of Asia’

Sri Lanka, located at the end of the Indian sub-continent is truly a “land like no other” when it comes to the biodiversity. The historic evolution of the island and the resulting physical nature has contributed immensely towards this diversity. The human factor influenced primarily by Buddhism and agriculture has further contributed to its diversity. The biodiversity of the country which contributes to its “wonder” is the basis of its tourism industry.

The principle contributing factors to this natural diversity is the geological history, geo-formation, climate, and human influences. Sri Lanka remains an isolated island today connected loosely through the shallow sand islands of the “Adams bridge” that spans to connect Mannar island of Sri Lanka and Ramashwaren point of India. It is believed that in the historic past Sri Lanka had land connections with the main Indian continent at least four times. The last such connection is believed to have been 15,000 years ago. On the other hand, the island has undergone subsidence too, creating a smaller island and restricting the organisms to this isolated land. These “upliftment’s” have contributed to the “dilution” of the flora and fauna through invasions from the continent, while the “subsidence” has contributed to isolation and thus through evolution to “speciation” (creation of new species). Combining these impacts with the land formation have made the biodiversity of Sri Lanka unique, especially in the central highlands and the southwestern sector.

The geological formation broadly recognizes a central highland with low rolling plains around it leading to the coastal zone. This feature provides a diverse landform across the country with different characteristics. The lowlands rise up to the highest levels in three steps or peneplains. Each peneplain rises sharply from the former level creating a distinct isolated landform.

Each of these peneplains thus have a unique biological diversity. It is further fractured by the ridge pattern of the mountain ranges and the 103 river systems that flow down to the sea from the central highlands. These river systems large and small create river basins that are geographically isolated from each other contributing to a diverse distribution pattern of the biodiversity and to the unique

feature of “point endemism”. Point endemism is a phenomenon where organisms are restricted to very small areas in the country. This is specially highlighted in the Amphibian, some invertebrates and plant species studied so far. This natural biodiversity as ecosystems, habitats have been affected by anthropogenic activities. Anthropogenic activities spanning over prehistoric times to present, together with natural factors have created a mosaic of diverse conditions that have contributed to a biodiversity which is incomparable and makes Sri Lanka a “land like no other”.

Exploiting this diversity should be the hallmark of ALL tourism products in the country, despite it ever been recognized by the industry. From cuisines to safaris to decorations to recreational products, non-would be possible if the biodiversity did not exist. It is the absence of this recognition that now needs rectification, as no country can duplicate or match it. Thus, development of tourism products can be truly different and unique, making Sri Lanka the destination of the “Land like no other – the wonder of the world – *ELAKIRI*”.

Vidya Jyothi,
Emeritus Professor Prof. S.W.Kotagama
University of Colombo

International Research Symposium 2022

Theme and Sub-Themes of Symposium **[Biodiversity and Sustainable Tourism]**

Ecotourism and Biodiversity

Tourism Development and Biodiversity Hotspots

Community Tourism and Biodiversity Conservation

Sustainable Tourism, Forestry and Land Use Planning

Biodiversity Conservation and Regional Tourism Development

Biodiversity Conservation and River-Based Tourism Development

Value Creation of Biodiversity for Sustainable Tourism

Governance and Biodiversity Tourism Development

Tourism Planning and Biodiversity Conservation

Overtourism and Biodiversity Conservation

Wasteful Tourism Consumption and Biodiversity

Stakeholder Partnership for Biodiversity Tourism

Technological Innovation and Biodiversity in Tourism

Biodiversity and Tourism Infrastructure Development

Creation of Tourism Experiences and Biodiversity

Agritourism and Conservation of Biodiversity

Destination Development and Biodiversity Conservation

Trends and Patterns of Tourism Demand and Biodiversity

Training and Capacity-Building for Biodiversity Sustainable Tourism

Promotion of Sustainable Tourism Products through Biological Diversity

Linking Biodiversity Conservation for Tourism Revenue Generation

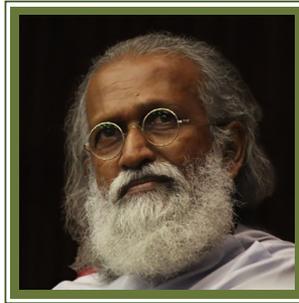
Management and Operational Models and Biodiversity Tourism

Social Equality and Biodiversity Tourism

Biodiversity and Urban Tourism

TECHNICAL SESSIONS

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Panel Chair

Vidya Jothi Emeritus Prof. Sarath Kotagama
University of Colombo



Dr. Kalinga Padmalal
Open University of Sri Lanka



Prof. Enoka Kudavidanage
University of Sabaragamuwa



Associate Prof. (Dr). Anukrati Sharma
Faculty of Commerce and Management,
University of Kota, India

Session Two: Rethinking Tourism: Policies and Strategies for Sustainable Tourism Development



Panel Chair

Prof. D.A.C Suranga Silva

Department of Economics, University of Colombo



Prof. Chandana Aluthge

Head Department of Economics
University of Colombo



Prof. M.S.M Aslam

Faculty of Management Studies
Sabaragamuwa University of
Sri Lanka



Dr. Sandeep Kulshreshtha

Indian Institute of Tourism and
Travel Management, India



Prof. Venkata Rao

Department of Tourism Studies
Pondicherry University, India

Session Three : Case Studies and Best Practices on Biodiversity and Sustainable Tourism



Panel Chair

Mrs. R.H.M.P. Abeykoon

Director, Biodiversity Secretariat,
The Ministry of Environment, Sri Lanka



Mrs. Geetha Karandawela

Director, Barberyn Ayurveda Resorts



Prof. Noel Scott

Sustainability Research Centre
University of Sunshine Coast, Australia



Mr. Gemunu Gunawardena

Chairman, Win-Stone Group

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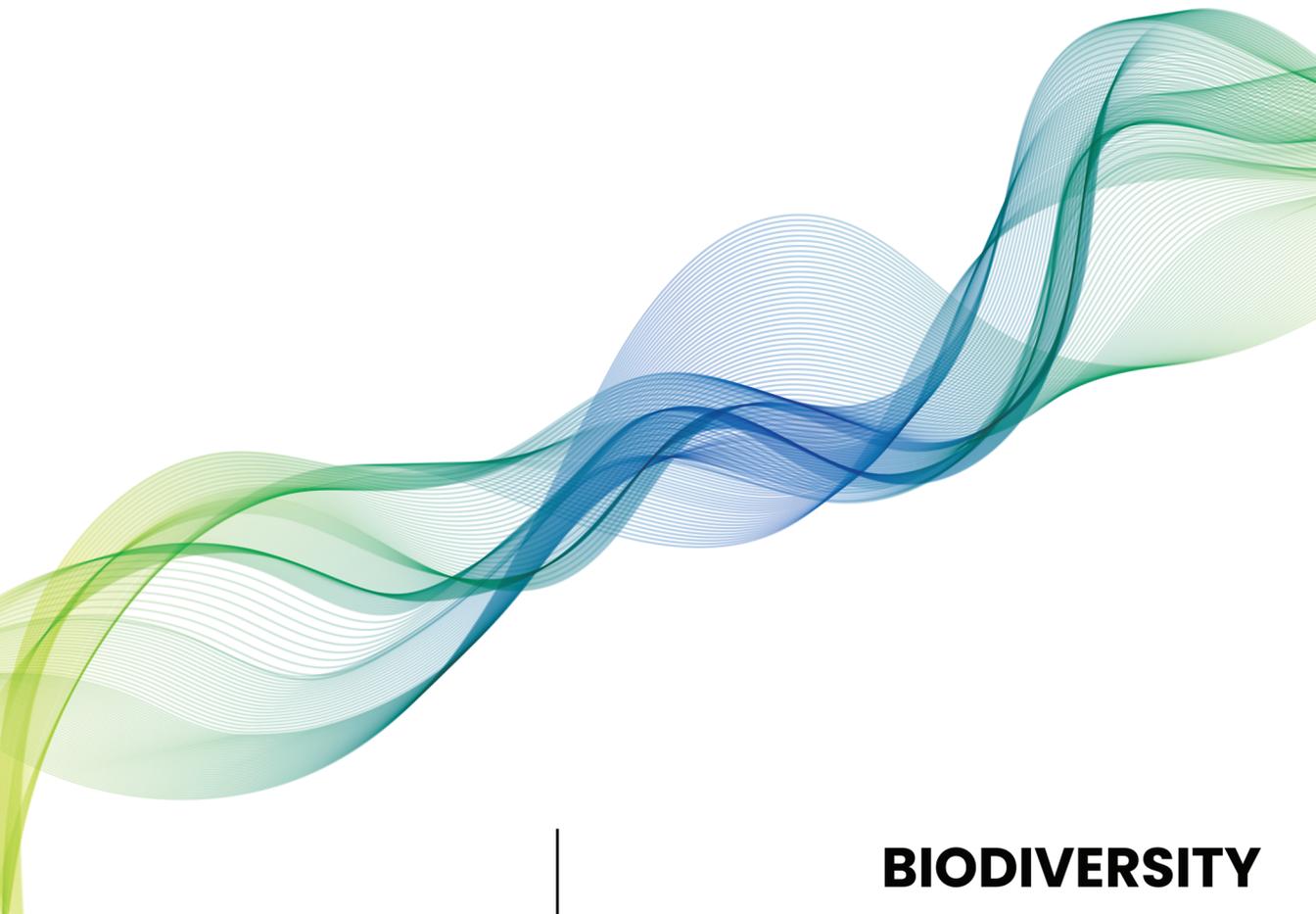
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**BIODIVERSITY
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Potential of wild Elephant-based ecotourism practices in and around Maduru Oya, National Park

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Abstract

The Maduru Oya National Park in the Eastern wildlife region of Sri Lanka shares boundaries with 26 Grama Niladhari divisions of five Divisional Secretary divisions belonging to the Ampara, Polonnaruwa and Badulla districts. The park holds five reservoirs, dominated by grasslands and secondary shrub forest patches, which in turn are the most preferred habitats of the elephants. It is estimated that 1,573 wild elephants live in this area, hence increasing the chances for encounters inevitably leading to high rates of human-elephant conflict (HEC). Considerably high habitat and ecosystem diversity matched with high endemism has led Department of Wildlife Conservation (DWC) to take action in declaring the area as a national park under the provisions of the Fauna and Flora protection Ordinance No 2 of 1937. The park is currently open to both local and foreign visitors. The purpose of this study is to find the potential for eco-tourism practices at the Maduruoya National Park (MNP). The visitor data for last five years were taken from the DWC. The elephant movement patterns in and around the MNP during the last two years were observed and recorded. Village surveys were carried out to determine occupancy of villagers, cultivated crops and their livelihood patterns. During the last five years (2017 -2021) a total of 13,504 visitor arrivals were recorded constituting 11,866 local and 1638 foreign visitors. The MNP had a visitation rate of only 0.16%, a very low percentage compared the Wasgamuwa National Park, a protected area adjacent to the MNP, with a 1.35% and high demand national parks such as Yala and Udawalawa national parks with 24.60% and 14.96% respectively. Majority of adjoining community are farmers and the main crops cultivated are paddy, maize, cowpea, pumpkin and chilly while the Chena cultivation is common method. Two main cultivation seasons are expanded from October to February, the Maha Season, and May to August, the Yala season. During this period there are plenty of food and water available in the park and most elephants remain inside the park. The MNP has four natural elephant corridors; namely,

Wasgomuwa, Galoya. Somawathi and Flood plains National parks. The HEC instances are high in these areas. High visit rates are visible in post harvested paddy fields and crop plantations and home gardens of villages. There are four entrances to the MNP - Maduruoya main entrance from Polonnaruwa, Galkada, Gurukumbura entrances from Mahiyangana, and Henanigala entrances from Dehiattakandiya. The study observes that there is hitherto untapped potential in developing visitor safari activities for elephant sighting. There is a high probability for sighting wild elephants during evenings after harvesting ends. People have the tree huts which they use to stay overnight to protect their crops. These tree huts could be improved as elephant sighting spots for tourists strictly adhering to ecotourism practices. Currently there are very few ecotourism ventures in the Dambana and Gurukumbura areas on a very small scale. The study finds that promotion of wild elephant based eco-tourism ventures could contribute positively to manage HECs.

Keywords: Eco tourism, human elephant conflict, wild life conservation, community

Negative impacts of river-based tourism development on biodiversity and strategies to conserve the biodiversity

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Abstract

River based tourism development is having an adverse impact on biodiversity. Most of the hotels, lodges, restaurants have the tendency in getting involved in river based tourism directly and indirectly. Thus, planning and implementation of river based tourism activities damage the biodiversity in several ways. It increases by time to time. This study has done the identification of the negative impact on the biodiversity mainly due to the tourism industry along the rivers and the strategies that can reduce the negative impact. The aim of the study is to raise the awareness of the people by drawing attention to the biodiversity. The study was carried out using secondary data. A secondary data analysis was done to identify the negative impacts of river based tourism development on biodiversity and suggestions to reduce those negative impacts. According to the findings of this study, it was found that the lack of proper waste management, lack of awareness of people about the occurrence of conditions harmful to biodiversity such as waste management and human activities, lack of proper awareness of the construction workers and the lack of proper planning before the start of riverside tourism activities.

Keywords: Biodiversity, conservation, development, negative impact, river-based tourism

Wildlife conservation at Yala National park: Conflict of interests between park management and safari jeep operators

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Abstract

Conservation conflicts have become a growing concern as protected area management authorities loaded with rules and regulation to protect the wild animals are constantly and increasingly at loggerheads with the buffer zone communities who fight for their interests. There is a continuous clash or conflict of interests between the two parties. Poverty, lack of institutional capacity, lack of resources and political pressure have been identified as main reasons fuelling conservation conflicts in protected areas. The very same reasons are also in the backdrop of the conservation conflict situations prevailing at the Yala National Park, a leading wildlife tourism destination with more than 1,000 of safari jeep operators alleged to have caused widespread damaging to biodiversity, livelihoods and human wellbeing in violation of the park rules and regulations. This study is aimed at exploring the prevailing situation of wildlife safari in the Yala National Park, Block 1; examining the conservation conflict issues and challenges there; identifying stakeholder's perspective for conservation conflict issues and challenges; and assessing the strategies to minimize these issues. This is a qualitative study adopting an inductive approach to meet with 20 respondents including a former director general, a park warden, an assistant warden, safari jeep drivers, hoteliers, visitors, photographers, a politician and Buddhist monks to conduct semi-structured interviews with them to collect data. The research took the form of a case study and the disclose analysis methodology was adopted. It has been noted that conservation conflicts have been on the rise at the Yala National Park since 2009 and the Park Management has confronted with a number of conservation conflict issues and challenges including the reckless conduct of Safari Jeep drivers who resort to violate park regulations and cause habitat destruction having impact on breeding pattern of wild animals. The stakeholders involving in the conservation of the Yala National Park both governmental and non-governmental should adopt methods including the awareness increase among safari jeep drivers and tourists, to prevent further continuance of conservation conflicts there.

Keywords: Conservation conflict, wildlife conservation, safari jeep operators

Tourism development through biodiversity hotspots in Galle City, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Biodiversity hotspots such as the Rumassala Mountain, Kottawa evergreen forest and Mangrove forest, and the Koggala Lake in Galle city have been identified for preserving for posterity while promoting for tourism development. As these biodiversity hotspots have exceptional levels of plant endemism and serious levels of habitat loss thereby attract a large number of tourists, it is imperative to academically ascertain the pros and cons of those factors and to study the means for perfecting the status quo. The present study therefore has following objectives - to explore the relationships between tourism development and biodiversity hotspots in Galle city; to explore innovative methods to enhance tourism development protecting unique and diverse ecosystems in the biodiversity hotspots; and to suggest means for empowering communities in the surrounding areas leveraging and mobilizing available natural resources for biodiversity financing. Brief interviews were conducted with tour guides and tourists from various countries to identify the most attractive locations in Galle city and to understand the reasons for their choices. Copies of a questionnaire were given to people living in surrounding areas of the aforementioned three biodiversity hotspots to collect data on individual village economies and their resource flows and their dependency on those hotspots. Findings of this study reveal that tourists prefer to explore the un-spoilt, rich biodiversity hotspots, and that there is a significant potential for the three hotspots to be further developed as eco-tourism destinations which could contribute for financial gain of the communities in the surrounding areas. The findings also observe the need for conducting awareness programmes to tour-guides and local communities on regular basis as tourism development in Galle has not only a symbiotic relationship with three biodiversity hotspots but also a parasitic effect.

Keywords: Tourism development, biodiversity hotspots, innovative methods, natural resources

Stakeholder collaboration for developing wildlife tourism: Challenges and emerging issues

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Abstract

Wildlife tourism is gaining popularity as a form of alternative tourism. Parallel to its increasing popularity, there are growing concerns pertaining to the ensuring of sustainability of wildlife tourism. One such major concern that has been discernible in promoting wildlife tourism in Sri Lanka is lack of stakeholder collaboration. Addressing this issue had been recognized as of utmost importance for the long-term sustainability in wildlife tourism. The dearth of literature focusing on stakeholder collaboration in wildlife tourism stresses the need that this area be studied thoroughly. Responding to that necessity, the present study focuses on (i) understanding the importance of establishing long-term stakeholder partnerships in wildlife tourism and (ii) identifying the emerging issues and challenges. For that purpose, a qualitative study was carried out as a case study covering the Yala National Park. Data were collected from 15 personnel including, park managers, wildlife officers, travel agents, members of the local community, and environmentalists using semi-structured interviews and applying convenience sampling. A thematic analysis has been used to analyze the collected data. Research findings on the importance of stakeholder collaboration are mainly intertwined with ensuring sustainability, community-based tourism development, and management of national park for tourism, sustainable tourism motivation, wildlife conservation, eco-tourism, and visitor satisfaction monitoring. The challenges that have been observed in this study including conflicting interests of stakeholders, lack of clear demarcation of authority, problematic stakeholder management, managing the impacts of seasonality, maintaining the trust of the local community and human-wildlife conflicts demand that they have to be navigated ensuring the park's sustainable management.

Keywords: Wildlife tourism, lack of stakeholder collaboration, long-term stakeholder partnerships, emerging issues and challenges in wildlife tourism

An examination of environmental management policy and practices by hotels and the contribution to eco-conservation

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Abstract

The green hotel concept that emerged in the 1990s is currently gaining enormous attention across the globe. This phenomenal attention grabbing by the green hotel and related concepts is mostly owing to the increasing negative environmental consequences caused by the tourism sector, such as environmental degradation, pollution, and other negative environmental repercussions. Hotels that have been set up in beautiful natural settings are identified as a source of environmental pollution. Hence, the importance of environmental management policy practices that need to be followed by hotels has arisen. This study is focused on identifying the different environmental management policy practices carried out by hotels to conserve the natural environment. Employing qualitative research methods, data were collected from hotel management staff for the purposes of this study through in-depth interviews and discussions. The Nuwara Eliya District, popularly known as ‘Ceylon’s tea capital’, was selected for the study owing to high tourist visitation there, its biodiversity and the natural uniqueness. Data were analyzed using the thematic analysis method. It has been observed that energy conservation, waste-water and solid waste management, environmentally friendly designing, infrastructure development, and awareness campaigns on environmental protection are some of the key initiations that were implemented by the star-classified hotels in the Nuwara Eliya District. Based on the findings study recommends setting up environmental management committees in each star-classified hotel to enhance the level of contribution of individuals and organizations and opt for eco-friendly options and alternative tourism activities such as agro, farm-tourism etc that promote environmentally friendly tourist activities. These findings are of paramount importance to private and public sector policymakers and particularly for reaching the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals declared by the United Nations.

Keywords: Environmental Management, Environmental Conservation, Hotel Management, Policy Practices,

Role of Diyasaru wetland park for sustainable urban tourism

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ABSTRACT

Biodiversity is considered a key attraction of all kinds of tourism including urban tourism. Urban tourism can be defined as multiple tourist activities taking place in urban spaces. Wetland parks in urban areas provide clean air, clean water, shelters for urban wildlife, and other ecosystem services amidst urbanization with steel and cement surroundings. More importantly, they are places to offer recreation and education for visitors. Diyasaru Park is located in a highly urbanized area in Colombo Metropolitan Region called Thalawathugoda. However, there is lack of evidence of a study about the impact of Diyasaru Park on sustainable urban tourism. Therefore, this study focused to examine the role of Diyasaru Wetland Park in sustainable urban tourism. In 2018, Colombo was declared as the first wetland city in the world by Ramsa and Diyasaru Uyana has also contributed to that. It is spread over 60 acres providing a shelter for 230 animal species and the wetland is nurtured by flooded woodlands, lakes, and ponds. Water bodies in the park create opportunities for water tourism while conserving biodiversity. Birds watching, educational activities, and commercial photo shoots can be considered as the main activities taking place and some visitors come to get mind and body relaxation through its scenic beauty. Approximately 2500 people visit the place for a week and they are not only from Colombo metropolitan region but also outstations. For this study, primary data were collected from 335 visitors, 5 relevant officials, and 5 people doing commercial activities in the area through survey questionnaires and interviews. According to the study it was found that Diyasaru Park positively contributes to sustainable urban tourism by conserving urban ecosystems, proving education, supporting income earnings, and improving health and wellbeing.

Keywords: Urban tourism, urban wetland park, urban biodiversity, sustainable development

Komodo National Park: Biodiversity-based tourism in Indonesia

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Abstract

The Indonesian landscape follows the Wallace's Line, the Weber's Line, and the Lydekker's Line. This condition makes Indonesia as one of the Mega Biodiversity Countries in the world even though it covers only about 1.3% of the earth's area. This diverse geographic, geological, and topographical conditions make the country's forests home to a great diversity of flora and fauna. The objective of this study is to examine the sustainable development and benefits for the environment and living things of biodiversity based national parks. The study based on the qualitative approach. The Komodo national park has been chosen for this study. In 1991 it was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The finding shows that one of the benefits is the preservation of cultural heritage is that it can be used as a vehicle for recreation, tourism, education, and local culture. Among the most important biodiversity treasures in Indonesia is Komodo National Park in Labuan Bajo, East Nusa Tenggara, which is a hidden paradise and holds amazing natural beauty and can attract tourists in terms of its culture. The park includes 3 larger islands (Komodo Island, Rinca Island, Padar Island) and 26 smaller ones. These islands are a part of the Coral Triangle, which contains some of the richest marine biodiversity on Earth. The waters surrounding the islands contain rich marine biodiversity. Biodiversity-based tourism has given importance to the nature capital of Komodo National Park. It has served to heighten awareness among tourists of its intrinsic value of Komodo dragon and provided local people with an income and an incentive to preserve their natural environment. Tourists can stay on a Phinisi boat for a few days while sailing to visit a row of exotic islands. Some of its beaches are used as diving or snorkelling to see the special underwater biodiversity. They can view stunning panorama of the underwater paradise and meet manta rays (the biggest stingray), pygmy seahorse, blue-ringed octopus, huge turtles, and red coral. The study recommends that, instead of concentrating on tourism products, perspective should be changed to the value of tourism. Tourist attractions come from the combination of the natural beauty, culture and local wisdom of the area, and the endemic animals. Tourists can also walk on the Pink beach which turns out to come from microscopic animals and reddish rock

fragments around the coastline. Furthermore, tribe people on the islands have a unique way of life and have preserved their culture and traditions for many generations. They live in Wae Rebo Hill, a village located at an altitude of 1,200 meters above sea level. It has natural scenery in the form of mountains combined with seven cone-shaped traditional houses. In addition to its mesmerizing panoramas, Komodo National Park can be promoted as biodiversity park as it is a famous for the endemic animals of Komodo dragons and its habitat. Therefore, since the park was initially established in 1980 to conserve the unique Komodo dragon (*Varanus komodoensis*), the last dinosaur on earth. This park can be expanded to protecting the entire biodiversity of the region, both marine and terrestrial.

Keywords: Biodiversity-based tourism, Komodo National Park, Labuan Bajo-Indonesia, Pink Beach

Wildlife tourism in Hurulu Eco Park: An application of transaction cost theory for USD exchange rate increment

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Abstract

The Hurulu Eco Park located in the Hurulu Conservation Forest at Habarana in the North Central Province of Sri Lanka, is a tourist destination from where seasonal elephant movement patterns could be observed throughout the year. Habarana currently serving as a tourism hub has the potential to attract more tourists and elevate Hurulu Eco Park to the top of the list of wildlife tourism destinations by the means of application of the Transaction Cost Theory (TCT) for USD exchange rate increment. This utilitarian value of TCT, a fundamental concept for cost management in any type of transaction, is important as wildlife tourism demand and transaction costs are particularly vulnerable to Sri Lanka's current increased USD exchange rates. This study looks at how stakeholders of Habarana-based wildlife tourism industry perceive the recent rise of the USD exchange rate, what variations in transaction costs have occurred as a result, and how to productively manage and mitigate transaction costs. The study's population included all stakeholders who had been involved directly in transactions in the Hurulu Eco Park. The findings point out that the increasing USD exchange rates had both positive and negative consequences on the transaction costs of the Hurulu Eco Park stakeholders between the years 2018 and 2022. Tour guides' transaction costs per tour have decreased by 64.5%, while hotels/homestays, foreign tourists, and safari drivers' expenditures have increased by 8.3%, 14%, and 281.2%, respectively. This scenario, nevertheless, had a contentious influence on the foreign tourist traffic load. When all other infrastructure factors are steady, an increase in the USD exchange rate is a stimulant for a boost in foreign tourist arrivals in Sri Lanka. The study has three key recommendations to keep transaction costs to a minimum; they are to retain the transaction channels of wildlife tourism with few intermediaries, to expand online transaction platforms, and to collaborate with international and private organizations for the effective maintenance of the wildlife tourism sector.

Keywords: Foreign tourist arrivals, Transaction Cost Theory, USD exchange rates, wildlife tourism

Review of selected value chain assessment tools for tourism industry and their adoption of environmental considerations

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Abstract

In 2019, tourism contributed 10.3 percent to global GDP while directly and indirectly accounting for 10.6 percent of total global employment. Tourism is the only industry that has a geographical and sectoral presence, having spillovers into the rest of the economy. For the industry to exploit its growth potential, the management of inter-linkages with other sectors of the economy is imperative. Concurrently, this natural-resource-dependent industry can pose negative impacts from overuse and mismanagement leading to the degradation of natural resources on which the industry is built. Sustainable consumption and production of tourism destinations would ensure long-lasting benefits. Several tools have been devised by organizations for value chain assessments of the industry. In that context, this study aims to compare and contrast three Value Chain Assessment (VCA) tools and the extent to which environmental considerations are integrated. A desk review was conducted to compare and contrast the following tools: (i) Aid for trade and value chains in tourism by OECD, WTO, and UNWTO (2013), (ii) The Tourism Value Chain by GIZ (2020), and (iii) Mapping Tourism Value Chains by UNEP (2019). The study revealed that all three VCA tools identified the importance of VCA for the tourism industry. VCA tools by (i) and (ii) were dominated by economic priorities, while environmental considerations were non-existent. UNEP tool adopted a holistic view considering both upstream and downstream chains, and indirect stakeholders while extending the line of sight and influence beyond the traditional areas of focus provided by the other two tools. Prioritization of finite resources for lifecycle impacts at each stage is provided in the hotspot analysis, through quantification of impacts across the value chain. Therefore, it is recommended for tourism destinations adopt the UNEP tool for VCA, as it provides due consideration for environmental concerns across the whole value chain.

Keywords: Environment, value chain assessment, tourism industry, hotspot analysis.

Frogging: Promoting frog watching as an ecotourism activity; evidence from star hotels in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Tourism is the second largest growing industry after information technology in the global economy. Many national economies have been able to generate plentiful amounts of foreign exchange from tourism industry by relentlessly marketing and promoting tourist destinations in their respective countries. Sri Lanka is blessed with a very rich biodiversity and its amphibian diversity has been recognized as exceptionally rich. As at now, the amphibian fauna of Sri Lanka comprises 119 species including 106 endemic species. With such advantageous prospects, Sri Lanka is naturally endowed with an encouraging potential to promote frog watching as an eco-tourism activity. In order to examine this potential, the present study adopted online survey research methods to collect experiential data from 100 individuals who had participated in frog watching. A separate survey was conducted to collect empirical data from in-house guests who had been residing during the period from June 01, 2018 to March 01, 2019 at the Jetwing Hotels in Sri Lanka and participated in the frog watching as a part of their ecotourism itineraries. It has been observed that European tourists and young adults are enthusiastic to participate in frog watching with their family or friends as an outdoor activity, and that they were willing to pay up to 20-30 US\$ for a two-hour frog watching tour in Sri Lanka. Frog watching is as an Eco tourism activity comprising all sustainable tourism aspects – planet, people and profit. It has the prospects of generating more foreign exchange in the meantime maintaining an emphatic contribution for the frog conservation as well as creating job opportunities in tourism industry.

Keywords: Eco tourism, frog watching, amphibian diversity, sustainable tourism

Agro tourism as a viable strategy for economic diversification in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Agro tourism, a combination of two big industries - agriculture and tourism, is closely connected with rural economic development. Similar to most of other alternative tourism approaches related with rural economy and thereby rural development Agro tourism possesses prospectus of win-win outcome for the farmers, tourist industry stakeholders, tourists and employment opportunities for the youth in the travel destination locations and communities. Consisting of farm accommodation, farm catering, participatory agro-tourism, farm retailing, therapy at the farm, holidaying on a farm, and farm entertainment, Agro tourism offers a supplementary income sources for the farming folk. Promotion of Agro tourism in rural Sri Lanka seems to be a viable approach in economic diversification attempts. This study is intended to ascertain the viability and tenability of suggestions that Agro tourism could be developed as a sustainable rural business. To that end, a sample of 40 residents of Hingurakgoda, a predominantly agricultural town in Polonnaruwa in the North Central Province of Sri Lanka, were surveyed using exploratory study methods and primary and secondary data collecting methods such as observations, interviews, structured questionnaires, reviewing literature including books, journals, tour itineraries etc. Results of the study are an indication to the fact that the levels of awareness among the sample of respondents on Agro tourism were very low thereby resulting in low level of application in practice. It is also discernible that implementing Agro tourism practices in Hingurakgoda could bring about positive impact on household income, development of infrastructure, direct marketing facilities, profits of small-scale farming community and seasonal flexibility of agricultural products.

Keywords: Agro-tourism, rural economic development, rural economic diversification

Wildlife-based ecotourism in Sri Lanka: A SWOT analysis validation

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Abstract

Ecotourism has become one of the fastest-growing sectors of global tourism in recent decades. Promoting ecotourism particularly wildlife-based concerns has an enormous potent to contribute positively to help improve national economy. This study envisages developing a wildlife-based ecotourism marketing model for identifying strengths and possible challenges by using SWOT technique to determine and define Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats in wildlife-based ecotourism and thereby contribute for promoting wildlife hotspots in Sri Lanka. Ecotourism market segmentation can be achieved at two levels: determining how wildlife-based eco-tourists distinguish themselves from general tourists and identifying SWOTs to promote wildlife-based eco-tourism - a subset of the field of sustainable tourism. One of its distinguishing features is its frequent engagement of small groups by small-scale businesses. In Sri Lankan context wildlife-based tourism is yet to expand to its fullest potent to create a substantial market ensuring an economically viable sustenance. The importance of a comprehensive market analysis covering this area cannot be over emphasized. This study relied on primary data collection methods including eliciting responses to a structured questionnaire that had been circulated among visitors at selected wildlife-based ecotourism destinations in both dry and wet zones of Sri Lanka. Two models were developed and tested using structural equation modeling method. Eco-tourists were segmented using a combination of multivariate statistical techniques to analyze the SWOT variables. On the basis of sample selection methods, two wildlife-based destinations in the dry and wet zones were selected as study sites for the purposes of this study. Non-probabilistic judgmental sampling technique was used to ensure easy access to respondents and quick data collection. Validation of the SWOT assessment was measured using a single item on a five-point Likert scale. All parameters were significant and 78% of the validation showed that more variable positively affects the Strength and opportunity to promote and market wildlife-based ecotourism in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Marketing, wildlife, ecotourism, wildlife hotspots, SWOT

A study on roadside elephants' interaction with motorists in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

It has been estimated that a single Sri Lankan elephant (*Elephas maximus maximus*) fetches around 11 million US dollars to the national coffers contributing to promote Sri Lanka's tourism. In Sri Lanka there are many roads that cut through forest patches frequented by commuters and tourists. The use of such roads has been widely recognized as an incredible experience for tourists and scenic viewers and also as having a negative effect on wildlife. Habarana road (A11) and Buttala-Kataragama road (B035) are two popular routes where wild elephants are fed by motorists and tourists. This study was conducted to examine the behavior of the wild elephants on two routes during the period between 2013 and 2019. The total research time spent on B035 road was 30,449 minutes and 11,602 minutes were spent at the A11 road. It was observed that there were around 85.71% of chances in seeing elephants at B035 standing near the road soliciting food from motorists. Unlike the elephants at A11 road, those at B035 road did not show much interest in strolling along the road, feeding on surrounding vegetation and even crossing the road. The motorists travelling through the B035 road were more interested in giving food for elephants compared to their counterparts using the A11 road. It is noted that elephants at the B035 road were the most addicted to general public feeding. Higher number of vehicle- elephant collisions took place at the A11 road. Findings of this study advocate for the setting up of ground surveillance to monitor traffic, similar to the systems at the Kaziranga National Park and National Highway 37 in Assam, India to mitigate vehicle - elephant collisions.

Keywords: Sri Lankan elephants, ethology, wildlife conservation, roadside elephants, ecotourism

A strategic approach for promoting biodiversity conservation through sustainable ecotourism in Kumana National Park

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Abstract

Sri Lanka is one of the world's recognized hotspots for biodiversity, with a great variety of nationally and globally important species. Located in the Southeast Sri Lanka, the 18,149-hectare large Kumana National Park is an internationally recognized ecotourism location and a bird sanctuary where a large diversity of birds migrate. However, in recent years, the number of living organism in the park has decreased. The purpose of this research is to formulate strategies for promoting biodiversity through sustainable ecotourism practices in the Kumana National Park. This study is based on the primary data collected by interviews based on structured questionnaire and the secondary data pertaining to the existing situation of the Kumana National Park. The collected data were processed through a SWOT matrix (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) in determining the strategies to improve the conservation of biodiversity. Moreover, a quantitative strategic planning matrix (QSPM) was used to select the prioritized strategies. The SWOT matrix produces eight alternative strategies with the QSPM matrix. The strategies focus on the development of hotels and welfare facilities for ecotourism in the area where the residents would have increased number of employment opportunities. The study findings call for increased number of environmental guard posts and patrols which would increase conservation effectiveness. The stakeholders in construction industry and tour guides must be given environmental education to help minimize their negative environmental effects. There is a need for increasing the funding for scientific studies in the region to reduce any harmful effects. These strategies would ensure the improvement of conserving biodiversity in the Kumana National in the meantime, assisting the local communities in their efforts towards regional development.

Keywords: Biodiversity, sustainable eco-tourism, SWOT

An analysis of environmental impact on coastal tourism with special references to Mirissa coastal area

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Abstract

There are growing concerns in the recent times that many environmental problems have arisen due to globally high demand for tourism practices that take place in the coastal areas. Is there any negative environmental impact of tourism on the coastal areas of Sri Lanka? That is what authors probe into, through this research. Accordingly, the main aim of this research is to study the negative environmental impacts of tourism on the coastal areas of Sri Lanka with special reference to the Mirissa Coastal Area located in the Matara District, Southern Province in Sri Lanka. The research area has witnessed a hike in the development of tourism practices. Both primary and secondary data collecting methods have been used with questionnaires and a field study, plus reviewing literature available from previous research studies, reports, websites, books, etc. to collect data. Moreover, the descriptive analysis, and statistical analysis methods have also been used to analyze the data and to probe into the negative environmental impact of tourism on the selected coastal area. The rise of unauthorized building structures along the coastline, the decline of the extent of the coastline, high deforestation, and coastal erosion are among the major negative impacts identified. Findings point out that increased tourism practices can cause a negative impact on the coastal environments and subsequently pave the way for the decline of tourist attractiveness. Therefore, it is crucial to create legal and attitudinal frameworks and strategies for hoteliers, tourists, local residents bringing their attention towards the importance of preserving coastline to curtail the negative impacts on the environment.

Keywords: Tourism industry, coastal tourism, negative environmental impacts

An analysis of environmental impacts of boat safaris on Maduganga river

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Abstract

The Maduganga wetland, declared as a conservation site under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands in 2003, is an ecosystem consisting of untouched mangrove in Sri Lanka. The site spreads over not less than 900 hectares providing home to hundreds of plants and animals. As a famous tourist attraction site, this area has witnessed increased human activities and population density in recent years. Vegetation in the area is being cleared to build hotels and the houses. The most famous tourism activity in the area is boat safaris in the Maduganga River. It is an attractive income for the local community providing job opportunities. These human activities have become a serious threat to the natural ecosystem which is meant to be protected for the posterity. This study is an attempt to analyze the environmental impacts of boat safaris on the Maduganga Wetland. An array of methods including questionnaire, interviews, literature review, observation and field visits was used to collect data related to the biological, social, economic and environmental aspects of the area. A sample of 50 tourism stakeholders such as villagers, environmentalists, politicians, representatives of NGOs and government officers was selected using the random sampling technique to collect data that were subsequently analyzed using statistical tabulation with the SPSS and MS Excel. The findings indicate that Maduganga wetland eco system is on deterioration on a daily basis owing to human activities including boat safaris. It recommends an urgent attention from all the stakeholders to minimize the negative impact of tourism on the environment of Maduganga wetland.

Keywords: Maduganga Wetland, boat safaris, environmental impact

Community based eco-tourism practices in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka: Empowering Panama community

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Abstract

Alternative forms of tourism, such as community-based ecotourism, have emerged in response to the growing awareness of the importance of environmental conservation and the value of responsible tourism. It is known as an effective tool for community development. The main focus of this tourism is to enable the community to provide financial benefits and empowerment for local people. This study intends to identify the community-based ecotourism capacities and possibilities available in the Panama Community, Ampara District, situated in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka and to assess the constraints affecting their fully-pledged development. Panama, widely regarded as a successful community-based ecotourism development and management model, was chosen on the basis of judgmental sampling technique. Primary and secondary data were collected through focus group discussions, pre-assessments, depth interviews, and non-participatory observations. Findings of the study encompasses community-specific attitudes toward tourism, community-developed tourism systems, ecotourism management, economic benefits to society, political and psychological empowerment, impact of the social structure on conservation of good practices toward biodiversity, safety and security practices, and cooperation of local administrative organizations.

Keywords: Community based eco-tourism, tourism development, environmental conservation

Promoting Sri Lanka as a biodiversity rich tourist destination

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Abstract

Tourism is one of the fastest growing business areas in the global economy. Many countries have successfully marketed their destinations and are generating substantial amount of foreign exchange from the tourism sector. Sri Lanka is a leading tourist destination in the world. This study was carried out to examine the prospectus, potentials and suitable strategies in promoting Sri Lanka as a biodiversity-rich destination. It examines the tourists' satisfaction levels of biodiversity related site seeing and aspects pertaining to their intent to recommend. A systematically designed questionnaire was used to collect data on measuring variables of biodiversity, prices of biodiversity site seeing and value and intention to recommend, and challenges of biodiversity related tourism. Copies of the questionnaire were circulated among 360 randomly selected tourists to collect data and 25 service suppliers were interviewed. The data was analyzed using the SPSS. A descriptive analysis was carried out to identify the nature of the sample and satisfaction level of major determinants. Using well-constructed interval scale, satisfaction level of each variable was identified. By using the beta correlation coefficient, the strength of relationship between tourists' biodiversity related site seeing and tourists recommend intention was proven to be significant and positive. The qualitative data was analyzed by coding and categorizing. The findings call for further action from policy makers, academics and practicing managers.

Keywords: Biodiversity, tourism, tourism product development, tourist satisfaction

Eco tourism in global tourism context: A bibliometric analysis

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Abstract

Tourism industry comprises distinct sectors, with eco-tourism being one of the prominent fields that is gaining significant attention in the global context in recent times. Ecotourism is rising exponentially in the Sri Lankan context. The present study aims to examine the global orientation of eco-tourism sector. For that purpose, a bibliometric analysis was adopted to have in-depth overview of growth and trends in the eco-tourism field. In addition, Scopus online data base was used to determine the research area from 2010 to 2022 and VOSviewer software was used to analyze the bibliometric data. Findings identify eco-tourism, sustainability, sustainable development and tourism management as four major clusters. Eco-tourism and management, eco-tourism and community development have been identified as merge clusters. Overlay visualization shows the growth of different emerging research areas in eco-tourism such as innovation, eco labeling, environmental management, environmental economics and ecological tourism. Moreover, density visualization shows sustainability, sustainable development and tourism management as the most frequently studied research areas in eco-tourism sector. Finally, the study provides many practical implications to policymakers regarding the global orientation of eco-tourism sector.

Keywords: Tourism industry, eco-tourism, sustainable development, bibliometric analysis

Promoting biodiversity conservation through cultural diversity and cultural capital for sustainable tourism

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Abstract

Tourism is a useful tool for reducing socioeconomic development disparities among the most vulnerable communities and conserving biodiversity by valuing cultural diversity. Biodiversity is the cause of cultural diversity, as culture consists of historically developed responses to distinct environmental conditions. Cultural diversity has the potential to foster cultural capital that distinguishes communities, which has the potential to attract tourists while biodiversity conservation is prioritized. Using data from in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and empirical observations encapsulated into an embedded multiple-unit case study, two field studies were conducted in *Batad*, Philippines, and *Kudawa*, Sri Lanka, following a qualitative research strategy. The data were then thematically analyzed to find that geographically marginalized communities are socially and economically disadvantaged, but rich in biodiversity as they have been unaffected by anthropogenic causes for a prolonged period. This fostered a cultural capital that can be invested in the tourism industry. However, the rapid growth of the tourism industry poses a threat to pristine ecosystems as people strive to entice visitors by shaping their surrounding environment based on the imagined needs of tourists without fostering the uniqueness. Also, it appears that both domestic and international tourists are attracted to culturally sensitive existential experiences that are rarely captured by local communities. The present study thus suggests that mainstreaming cultural diversity in community-based tourism, particularly in the most marginalized communities, would be one of the primary strategies for biodiversity conservation. Overall, it is proposed that fostering cultural capital and encouraging tourists to have unique, localized experiences through community-inclusive activities will help protect biodiversity and boost the local economies of underprivileged communities.

Keywords: Biodiversity conservation, cultural capital, cultural diversity, marginalized communities

A Bibliometric analysis of sustainable tourism and biodiversity

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Abstract:

The present study is intended to analyze sustainable tourism and biodiversity research bibliometrically from a longitudinal point of view from 2002 to 2022. From the Scopus database, 63 selected papers with filters were chosen and analyzed. Bibliometrix, a cutting-edge programme was utilized to analyze published research on tourism, sustainable tourism and biodiversity. The study was divided into four sub-analyses - network analysis, descriptive analysis, co-word analysis and reference publication year spectroscopy (RPYS). Findings show that publications about sustainable tourism and biodiversity have significantly grown during the past five years and they are mostly dominated by a small number of authors. Most of the researches were spotted from the USA and Australia. This study calls for the need of maintaining a strong perspective on sustainable tourism and biodiversity research for theoretical and practical advancements.

Keywords: Bibliometric analysis, sustainable tourism and biodiversity, network analysis, descriptive analysis, Co-word analysis

Impact of environmental based tourism on biodiversity: An analysis based on Tobit regression model

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Abstract

The symbiotic relationship between biodiversity and environmental factors are intertwined and inseparable. Many countries around the world have used these natural resources to produce commodities by combining different elements of the environment resources, such as natural forest, parks, waterways, and other natural amenities provide unique heterogenous products and services that are demanded by local and international tourists. Continuous use of these resources has diminished quantitative and qualitative characteristics of the resources and potentially risking the production of tourism related goods and services. The alarming rate of classifying endangered species and loss of biodiversity have awoken the researches to identify causes and develop mitigation measures to protect the biodiversity and environment. The objective of the study is to examine the impact of environmental and tourism aspects variables on biodiversity. Internationally, country relative biodiversity richness variable was constructed utilizing country specific endangered birds, fish, mammals and plant data. A Tobit regression model was performed employing related explanatory variables for 152 countries. Results indicate number of tourist arrivals, host country revenue from tourist and annual average temperature have a significant negative impact on biodiversity while per-capita Gross National Income (GNI) has a positive significant impact on biodiversity. Countries that are promoting tourism as a means of economic development have to allocate resources to conserve biodiversity richness and curtain activities that led to global warming.

Keywords: Biodiversity, tourism, climate variables and Tobit model

Role of biodiversity in promoting tourism with reference to Sigiriya, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Sri Lanka has a diverse range of aquatic and terrestrial habitats and flowering plants, amphibians, reptiles and mammals as the highest species density in the Asian region. The land use was instrumental in large-scale changes in nature that have both positive and negative impact on the biodiversity of Sri Lanka. Furthermore, six Ramsar sites have been identified, showing the importance of wetlands in Sri Lanka. An accurate inventory of biodiversity in Sri Lanka does not contribute to the conservation of biodiversity. Lack of knowledge about available resources is one of Sri Lanka's significant shortcomings in biodiversity conservation stems. Although prevalent for a long time, as of today, the issue mentioned above has yet to be formally addressed in Sri Lanka's tourism industry. There is a lack of understanding of the protection of biodiversity and visitor satisfaction, and marketing biodiversity sites for tourist. This study was undertaken to fill this void in the industry. Sigiriya is one of the world-famous tourism destinations with rich biodiversity. Therefore, this research focused on the biodiversity of the Sigiriya and to assess the tourism opportunity and to promote the rich biodiversity locations. Field survey and focus group discussion adopted to identify tourism opportunities and visitors' interest within the site. This study recommends forming a forum for much-needed awareness campaigns to minimize the effects of extreme anthropogenic activities and proposes the establishment of centers to promote the promotion of research and education on Sri Lankan biodiversity for local, international students, researchers and other stakeholders. Further, this study emphasizes to carry out studies in neglected areas of biodiversity and disseminate information from the scientific community to the public of well-studied regions to encourage conservation.

Keywords: Biodiversity, biodiversity tourism, visitors' satisfactions

An analysis of prospectus of utilizing biodiversity for tourist attraction by the hotel industry in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Possible threats against sustenance of biodiversity have been highlighted more often than usual in the current discourse of promoting Sri Lankan hotels among both foreign and local tourists. The importance in maintaining Sri Lanka's status as a biodiversity rich tourist destination cannot be overemphasized and the role that ought to be played by the country's hotel industry towards that end too has often being cited in academic and laymen literature. This paper describes strategies that could be utilized to reduce the harm on biodiversity while designing hotels with consideration for the environment and ways of maximizing the benefits of natural biodiversity for the Lankan tourism industry. This study is a descriptive in nature and qualitative in its approach. Facts and data were collected through a comprehensive survey of available literature including peer-reviewed papers and former research and through observations. It has been observed that the prevailing situation in Lankan hotels catering to tourists have a long way to go with regard to biodiversity safeguard practices. The study highlights the need for increased awareness on biodiversity protection practices currently in vogue at international standard level and adopt them to contribute significantly to biodiversity preservation and the development of local and international tourism.

Keywords: Tourism, biodiversity, environment, hotel industry

Study on pollinator habitat richness in urban residential gardens in Sri Lanka: In the case of nature-positive tourism in Kandy

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Abstract

The connection between nature and travel is a critical part of tourism. In this context urban residential gardens together with urban agriculture could play an important role in urban tourism. Pollination is an important ecosystem service where the conservation of pollinator habitats can directly enhance pollinator diversity hence urban agriculture. This study focused on the richness of pollinator habitats in urban residential gardens in Kandy to support pollinator conservation. A self-administrated questionnaire used in six Grama Niladhari Divisions were randomly selected and, in each division, ten front gardens in adjacent households were selected (n=60). The qualitative research method used in this research and the presence of seven different pollinator habitats was recorded (spontaneous vegetation, deadwood sticks or logs, rock piles, plants with hollow pithy stems, bare ground, tree cavities and water sources) and the habitat richness was measured by counting the number of habitats (score from 0 to 7) per household. The findings of the study revealed that, the pollinator visitation was recorded in each garden thrice over three months. Identified pollinators were categorized into six broader groups. Further, the percentage of vegetation cover and the impermeable surface were noted. The most abundant pollinator group was bees (54%) followed by Flies (22%). The habitat richness and pollinator visitation both increased with increased vegetation cover up to 51-75% and thereafter, a decline was recorded. Gardens with a low percentage of impermeable surfaces were best for pollinators. The presence of bare ground (75%), hollow pithy stems (74%) and spontaneous vegetation (58%) were the most common habitats in the residential gardens of Kandy. The results indicate that 35% of gardens have a total of four habitats while 5% have all seven habitats. Hence, residential gardens in urban Kandy support pollinators and 51-75% of vegetation cover could be considered the best percentage to support pollinators for nature-positive tourism.

Keywords: Insect pollinators, pollinator habitat, residential gardens, urban tourism

Examining the impacts of visitor activities on wildlife at Yala National Park, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Wildlife tourism is one of the famous tourism segments in Sri Lanka which attracts thousands of international and domestic tourists. Among the Lankan national parks, Yala is the most popular destination for wildlife tourism and it possesses better competitive advantages including being the second largest national park with rich biodiversity. In this context, the present study attempts to examine the impacts of visitor activities on wildlife tourism at the Yala National Park. The study has adopted qualitative methodology and employed interviews, discussions, and observations to collect data. This study limited its boundaries to blocks 1,2,3,4 and 5 of the Yala National Park premises. The findings of the study show that unethical tourist behaviors such as animal feeding, photography, dumping of polythene and plastic waste, wildlife hunting activities, and walking in the protected areas are some of the most crucial visitor activities that impact heavily on wildlife habitats and flora and fauna. Apart from that, disturbing jeep safaris, camping, and overcrowding were also identified as threats to the well-being of the wildlife and the ecosystems. Thus, the study recommends to the relevant government authorities including the Department of Wildlife Conservation, the Forest Department, the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority, etc. to introduce new rules and regulations to control unethical behaviors of visitors and to overcome carrying capacity issues. It is suggested to implement visitor awareness programmes at the entrance gate before permitting visitors to enter the protected areas. Additionally, encouraging the private sector tourism stakeholders including jeep drivers, tour guides, and so on groups towards promoting long-term sustainable practices at national parks may have significant outcomes while minimizing the negative visitor impacts at national parks.

Keywords: Yala National Park, visitor activities, behavioral impacts, wild life

Assessment of prospects and constraints of sustainable ecotourism: evidence from Batticaloa district

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Abstract

Ecotourism has the potential to be the fastest-growing segment of the global tourism industry. Tourism is a primary economic generating activity in Sri Lanka, which represents more than 12% of the country's GDP (Gross Domestic Product) and gives the third highest foreign exchange. Batticaloa district is a dramatically well-improved tourism place in the Eastern part of Sri Lanka. Although, the purpose of the study was to assess the prospects and constraints of the Sustainability of Ecotourism in Batticaloa District. The study takes an integrated approach to ecotourism development by identifying ecotourism prospects and constrains and developing a model to assess ecotourism sustainability by matching the factors evaluation. However, an interview-based survey used to identify the perception of field related people (Community people, tourist, hotelier, tourism planners, etc.) which is helpful to find out the prospect and constrain of the sustainable ecotourism development in Batticaloa District. The findings of this study may only apply to the current state of ecotourism and future development of ecotourism in the Batticaloa district. Finally, the implement activities of the selected ecotourism suitable sites must be recommended so the study proposed some strategic recommendation to develop ecotourism activity and reduce the constraints in the study area.

Keywords: Ecotourism, sustainability, prospect and constraints, Batticaloa

Potential of developing Colombo city wetlands as an ecotourism destination

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Abstract

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (Iran 1971) identified a wetland as an area where water is the primary factor controlling the environment and the associated plants and animal life. Moreover, wetlands enhance the water quality, prevent flooding, improve the thermal comfort of the area, and provide effective biologically diverse systems. Most recently Ramsar convention has identified the importance of addressing wetland tourism due to the higher demand of tourism expectations and negative impacts on wetlands due to urbanization and pollution. According to the statistical data of the report – Destination Wetlands – UNWTO, global tourism expenditure reached 1 trillion USD in 2011, while half of all international tourist travel destinations are focused on Wetlands. There are approximately calculated as 15% of the land area coverage of Sri Lanka as wetlands including natural and artificial interior wetlands. During the 13th Conference of Parties (COP13) the Ramsar convention of wetlands, Colombo city has been accredited as a Ramsar Wetland site. Colombo city can be conceived as a city, build on and around wetlands. More than 20 Km² of the CMR is covered in a wetland with diverse biodiversity. Therefore, this research focus to identify the potential of ecotourism in Colombo city wetlands and to identify the highest potential wetland in Colombo city as an ecotourism destination. With the guidance of the literature review, observation survey and online survey, the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats were identified for the development as an ecotourism destination in Colombo wetland cities. The accuracy of the survey data and the highest potential wetland as an eco-tourism destination in Colombo city was identified by the multiple criteria evaluation and weighted overlay method via ArcGIS software. The results of this analysis can be used to identify the highest potential wetland in an area for ecotourism. As well as this methodology can be used to identify potentials in wetlands in other destinations.

Keywords: Urban wetland, multi-criteria evaluation, weighted-overlay, GIS, ecotourism, SWOT

Growth of Eco-tourism; The Global Scenario

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Abstract

The ecotourism market shows a substantial growth rates over the last few years and is estimated that the market will grow significantly in the forecasted period i.e. 2021 to 2028. The Global Ecotourism market is expected to grow at a very fast pace over the projection period. Rising awareness of global warming and visitor devastation of natural beauty are primary drivers of the ecotourism market's expansion. Ecotourism allows for the exploration of new locations, the opportunity to socialize with the local community, and participation in daring activities. This study is examining the global potentials and best practices that can be implemented for eco-tourism in Sri Lanka. Ecotourism mostly caters to tourists that want to visit natural, unknown locations while protecting the environment. The data were based on secondary sources such as research articles, books, websites, and other relevant publications and analyzed through thematic analysis. The study identified three thematic approaches to promote ecotourism in Sri Lanka; such as (1) Global Trends, (2) Best Practices and (3) Potentials. Accordingly, global trends indicate the demand for ecotourism and ecotourism projects can be implemented based on the analysis of potentials and best practices. The study also suggests innovative practices and recommends implementation plan to promote eco-tourism practices in Sri Lanka. The thematic model developed in this study and its applications will be useful for practitioners and policy makers.

Keywords: Eco-tourism, Global best practices, potentials, Sri Lanka

An analysis of bird diversity for supporting avitourism development in Kirala Kele, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Bird watching can bring economic resources to communities, diversifying their livelihoods and contributing to the conservation of biodiversity at the Kirala Kele, an urban wetland ecosystem located in the Matara District, Southern Province, Sri Lanka. The main purpose of this research is to analyze the diversity of bird species in the Kirala Kele and identify its support in promoting avitourism. The research was conducted in four selected locations focusing on the species' habitats, and anthropogenic activities. Line transect method was used with a length of 200m in selected locations and visual observations were conducted for each transect. Data collection was carried out from April 2022 to September 2022 once a month from 0600 to 0800 hours and 1600 to 1800 hours. The results showed that there were 72 species of birds including four endemic species from 38 different families. Species namely, Sri Lanka Lesser Flameback (*Dinopium psarodes*), Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot (*Loriculus beryllinus*), Crimson-fronted Barbet (*Megalaima rubricapillus*) and Sri Lanka Swallow (*Cecropis hyperythra*) have been recorded as endemic species. The study concludes that the Kirala Kale contains a good diversity of birds and it has great potential to be developed into an attraction of tourism. For the future of tourism development through avitourism, there are several important areas that needed to be addressed. Among them are promoting birds' conservation in the community through bird-watching training on conservation and ecotourism for the community, and strengthening the capacity and capability of people who are living around the sanctuary on avitourism and ecotourism. Further studies on the diversity of birds in migratory season and different locations within and around the sanctuary are recommended.

Keywords: Avifauna, bird watching, diversity, ecotourism

Trade-off between biodiversity conservation and tourism development: A strategic purview for intervention

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Abstract

Biodiversity is one of modern primary tourism attractions. However, forecasts indicate tourism will grow in biodiversity hotspot countries, necessitating careful planning to avoid negative impacts on biodiversity. The opportunities and threats for biodiversity conservation continue to grow when the scale of the tourism industry expands. Globally, biodiversity is vanishing at a rate many times faster than natural extinction as a result of un-sustainable human behaviors. Under this condition biodiversity hotspots are priority areas for immediate conservation actions. Biodiversity hot spots has more potential to attract international tourists than conventional tourist destinations in present as well as in future. However, most of the times there is a negative correlation between tourism development and biodiversity conservation, especially when developments take place without management standards and guidelines to initiate the direction of the development. Many biodiversity hotspots are experiencing very rapid tourism growth and equivalent loss of biodiversity. The study expects to find a initiatives for building up a constructive relationship between tourism development and biodiversity conservation. This study was qualitative in nature and interviews held with experts to gather information. Collected responses were analyzed to identify research outcomes. This study recommends strategic interventions between biodiversity conservation and tourism development such as capitalizing on biodiversity assets, reducing the vulnerability of natural resources by active conservation. The study also recommends to develop an information system to monitor potential environmental impacts. Initiatives to encourage locals' attitudes toward biodiversity conservation and lowering reliance on natural resources, especially concerning the small-scale, locally-owned ecotourism sector are identified as important future development directions.

Keywords: Biodiversity conservation, tourism development, intervention strategy

Protection of biodiversity: Contribution through the legal framework of Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Sri Lanka's cultural and natural heritages contribute significantly to the sustenance of tourism industry and protection of biodiversity is one of the core aspects of heritage management in recent times. A key consideration in protecting the country's biodiversity is the contribution made by Sri Lankan legal framework towards that end. This study is focused on assessing and evaluating the provisions made available by the Sri Lankan legal framework for the protection of biodiversity. Sri Lanka is a state party to many international treaty conventions providing for the protection of biodiversity; however, their fully implementation has hit a snag owing to several reasons. One such is that Sri Lanka is a dualist state where international treaties cannot become domestic law without being enacted in Parliament. The research methodology adopted in this study is qualitative and comparative in nature with analytical descriptive methods focusing particularly on the provisions in the following legislations: the Forest Ordinance No. 16 of 1907, Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance No. 2 of 1937, National Environment Act. No. 47 of 1980, Mines and Mineral Act No. 33 of 1992 and Marine Pollution Prevention Act No. 59 of 1981. The Courts by means of interpreting them and providing case laws have also contributed for the expansion of the scope of the statutory framework to a certain extent. The study notes that the existing legal framework of Sri Lanka falls behind the present international standards in ensuring the protection of biodiversity and emphasizes the need for enforcement mechanisms in line with the international standards.

Keywords: Biodiversity protection, legal framework, legislations

An analysis on readiness of Cinnamon tourism in Karadeniya, Sri Lanka: Small Scale Entrepreneurs' perspective

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Abstract

This study was conducted to analyze the readiness of small-scale entrepreneurs to initiate Cinnamon tourism in the Karadeniya Divisional Secretariat Division, Galle District, Southern Province of Sri Lanka. Cinnamon tourism, considered a type of agro-tourism, has the potential to improve the living standards of residents in the area by acquiring sustainable development. The study sample was 170 small-scale entrepreneurs who are running a business with cinnamon production based in Hipankanda Production village. Data were collected through a semi-structured questionnaire and in-depth interviews. To analyze the data both qualitative and quantitative methods were used. According to the analysis majority of the entrepreneurs have willingness to agro-tourism based on the cinnamon industry due to resource availability, income generation, employment opportunities, and support from the nearby tourist locations. The findings of the study indicate that there are significant positive factors available in entrepreneurs' readiness to initiate cinnamon tourism. It has been noted that government intervention is needed to train entrepreneurs in soft skills in marketing and technology. The Government should extend financial assistance and infrastructure facilities to encourage entrepreneurs to cinnamon tourism. These findings are important to planners, implementers, and policymakers for assuring sustainable development of the country.

Keywords: Agro-tourism, Cinnamon Tourism, cinnamon entrepreneurs, sustainable development

Community-based and agro tourism: Resilience in the face of COVID-19 in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Community based tourism (CBT) is an alternative tourism approach that provides for the tourists with the opportunity to experience the local way of life by visiting remote or rural communities on the invitation of their residents to enjoy authentic indigenous culture while ensuring that the economic benefits of tourism would stay within that particular communities. Agro tourism is another form more or less similar to CBT but with difference in allowing the travellers to visit and work in a farm for purposes of enjoyment and education. Combining these two strands of alternative tourism approaches offers an array of new sources of revenue at the rural level as well as promoting tourism industry in national level. The importance of CBT and Agro tourism approaches is highlighted in the recent COVID-19 pandemic situation where quarantines, travel restrictions, lockdowns and isolation of communities became the order of the day. This study is aimed at formulating the best model to develop community based agro tourism in Sri Lanka as a resilient mode in the face of similar adversity. The model tourism approach could offer the tourists with a vast array of new experiences including community activities, experiences in plantation area, uniqueness of villages, aryurvedic (*Helawedakama*) treatments, meditation to uplift the human immunity, homestays, tracking area, places to gain knowledge, cooking demonstration activities, places to rest and relax, isolate areas, the daily routine of a villager, learning experiences, and new practices with a real cultural and traditional life experience. Community based agro tourism could be a mode of resilience and be perfected through increased public private partnerships.

Keywords: Community based tourism, agro tourism, model of resilience

Impact of green practices on domestic travelers' revisit intentions with special reference to five-star hotels

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Abstract

As consumers become more aware of the seriousness of environmental problems and the importance of environmental protection, more hotels are implementing green practices to address their customers' environmental concerns. This is due to undeniable negative environmental impacts resulting from hotel activities daily. Therefore, hoteliers are grabbing this opportunity to preserve the environment as they could reap the benefits from the green practices. Despite the promising benefits, the green practices in place at hotels are still low. Thus, the main objective of this study is to investigate the impact of green practices on revisit intention of domestic travelers in Sri Lanka. Quantitative research methods were adopted and a sample of 385 domestic travelers who visited five star hotels in Colombo was selected for the study using a convenient sampling technique. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire and the data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling. The results help identifying that there is a positive relationship between "green" practices and domestic traveler's revisiting intention. Findings provide valuable input to hoteliers in determining their existing environmental status and the amount to which they need to improve their green practices in order to increase domestic travelers' revisit intentions. They also offer an opportunity to adjust to the developments and trends in the tourism industry that are apparent in post-COVID-19 pandemic context, catering to the growing interest in sustainable tourism and green practices.

Keywords: Green practices, domestic travelers, revisit intention

Tourism planning in biodiversity and natural resources conservation

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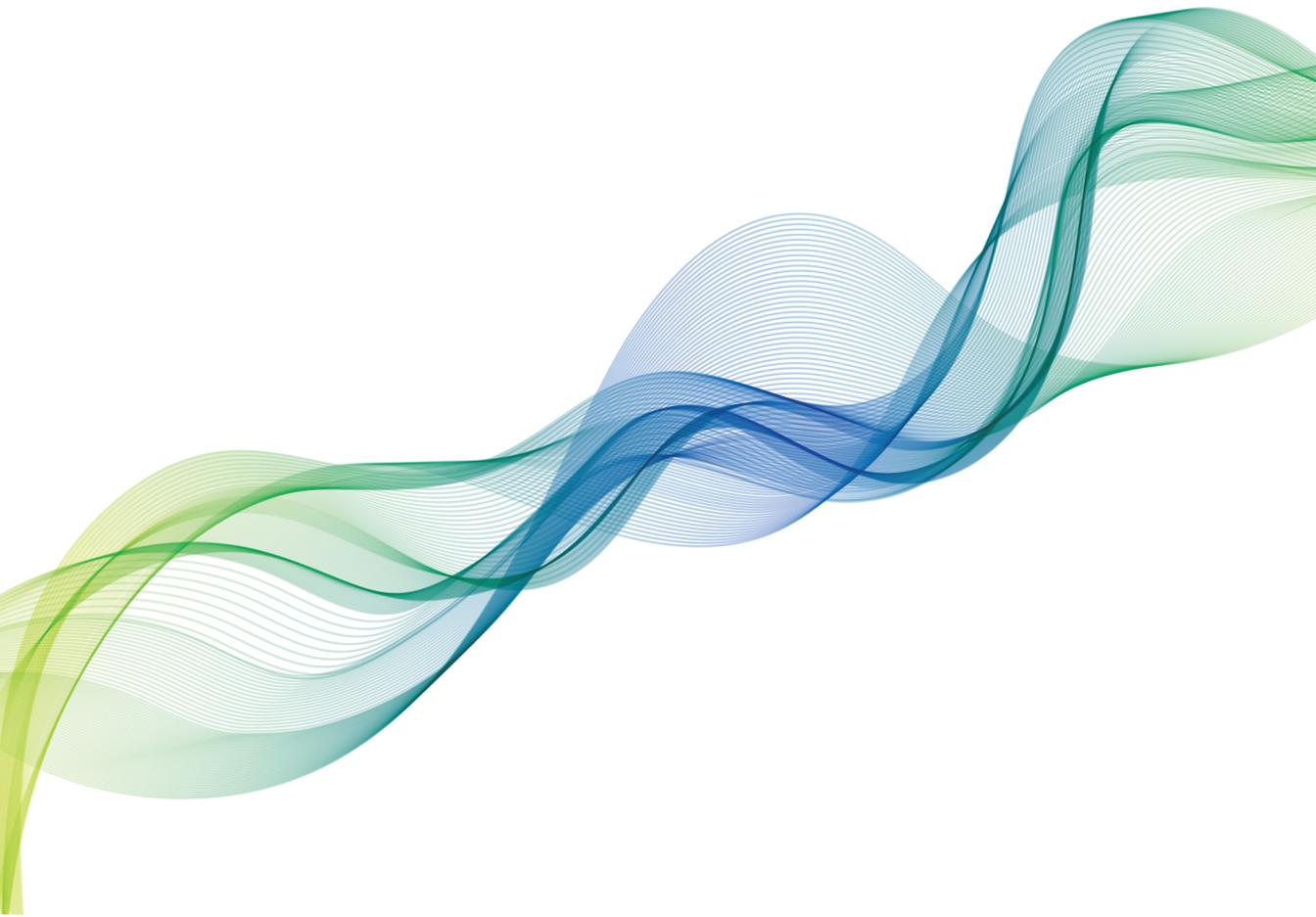
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Abstract

Tourism industry is accused for over consumption of natural resources thus pushing the planet to greater calamity in time to come. Hence, the planet is facing serious threats of over consumption resources, biodiversity loss and disruption, and multi facts of related issues affecting mankind. With the biodiversity crisis, as with any crises, there are both challenges and opportunities. There are school of thought claim that over consumption is and exaggerated issue by the environmental activists. Scientists have warned us of a “sixth mass extinction” event in Earth’s history. Despite such a dire warning, the biodiversity crisis - the fact that our very existence is being threatened by human activities destroying nature - is not as widely recognized and discussed enough as it should be, both within the tourism context and in general. Tourism and biodiversity, over consumption of resources are intimately interconnected. Therefore, this study investigates the critically important factors in planning and development control of sustainability of tourism and protection of overexploitation earthly resources and biodiversity. Resources and biodiversity influencing not only tourism development itself, but also controlling other forms of development that might be detrimental to the economic sustainability of tourism in the short or long term. Tourism and planning sometimes make for an uncomfortable partnership. However, gaps in planning in tourism industry can have a damaging impact on natural resources and biodiversity, pollution, habitat destruction increasing numbers of visitors, and the unchecked exploitation of natural resources for commercial gain, can all harm plants, animals and natural ecosystems, and reduce biodiversity. The use of natural resources in the provision of new tourist accommodation and facilities, and the development of associated infrastructure on coastal wetlands, for example, can be particularly damaging. More positively, tourism can play an important role in biodiversity conservation, but this requires careful and sensitive planning and management in order in o to avoid negative impacts on biodiversity, and such approaches may run directly counter to commercial tourism development pressures. Unfortunately, the

industry lack consultation of scientist and environmentalist in tourism planning in the area of conservation of natural resources and biodiversity rather than their extraction. Also still lacks awareness on tourism planners about the importance of biodiversity, and how serious the crisis is. This study recommends the implementation tactics and application of best practices in tourism planning and biodiversity conservation.

Keywords: Tourism planning, biodiversity, conservation, natural resources



TRACK TWO

**RETHINKING TOURISM :
POLICIES AND STRATEGIES
FOR SUSTAINABLE
TOURISM DEVELOPMENT**



An analysis on influence of economic, environmental and socio-cultural factors in sustainable tourism development

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Abstract

Tourism development paves the way for increased volumes of foreign currency inflows, infrastructure development, employment generation, regional development, economic multiplier effects and introduction of new management and educational experience. Such increases actively affect economic, environment and socio-cultural sectors of society. Sri Lanka's Eastern Province is an emerging destination for both local and foreign tourists. Despite limits in existing tourism products, the destination has an enormous potential for growth. In order to harness that great potential, rethinking of sustainable tourism and innovative ways are mandatory requirements. It is a sine qua non to strike a balance between these mandatory requirements and environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development. The present study is an analysis of direct and indirect economic, environmental and socio-cultural factors influencing sustainable tourism development in the Eastern Province. In collecting data, a structured questionnaire was referred to 293 respondents. Data from the questionnaires were coded and analyzed using SPSS. The analysis indicated that tourists' recognition of the Eastern Province as an authentic travel destination is interweaved into its environmental, economic and socio-cultural factors. It pointed out that improving positive public perception towards tourism industry is vital for its sustainable development. Findings of the analysis place a great emphasis on relevant authorities to take urgent and adequate steps to reduce the negative impacts, to increase government and stakeholder participation, community awareness, awareness among tourists about cultural values in place since time immemorial in the region.

Keywords: Sustainable tourism, economic, environment, socio-cultural development

Augmenting environmental sustainability through sustainable certification of Sri Lankan tourism industry

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Abstract

Sri Lankan tourism industry while being accorded the rank of top second or third places among the main foreign exchange generators has been marked for bringing home both positive and negative impacts. It could avail of the means of sustainable tourism certification which is a globally accepted approach to mitigate the negative impacts of tourism. There are several certification tools offered by various parties (with ISO certification is having been considered the key business certification in the world), and several certification organizations are for sustainable tourism certification. A criterion postulated by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) is considered the global standards for sustainability in tourism. The present study is intended to compare and assess pros and cons of two environmental-related business certification criteria (ISO 14001 and ISO 9001) and GSTC's sustainable tourism criteria to identify their potent towards augmenting environmental sustainability. A desk review method was adopted to collect, organize and compare data obtained from the official websites on certification tools and details of the organizations. Results of the review indicate that the ISO 14001 is for environmental standards, ISO 9001 is for quality standards and GSTC criteria aims for all sustainability standards. The ISO 14001 and GSTC lead to the environment and sustainability while ISO 9001 calls for maintenance of quality standards by corporate and the public sectors. In augmenting environmental sustainability ISO 14001 could offer aims to identify means for protection of the environment process, ISO 9001 could assure a high value of corporate customers and the GSTC could contribute for wherewithal of standards of sustainable tourism.

Keywords: Environmental conservation, sustainable tourism, sustainable certifications, ISO certification, Global Sustainable Tourism Council

A strategic approach for human resource development in small and medium scale entrepreneurs toward sustainable tourism in the Eastern province of Sri Lanka

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Abstract

In recent years, the concept of sustainable tourism has increased in regard to human resource development (HRD) among small and medium-sized entrepreneurs (SME) in order to achieve customer satisfaction through innovation and creativity. Tourism attractions in the east cost of Sri Lanka have often been highlighted as potent base for generating revenue by former research and case studies which in the same time point at poor customer satisfaction owing to inferior standard of quality in customer services as stumbling blocks towards further improvement. This resulted in low rates of tourists with compared to other similar destinations in the country. The present study attempts to bring out the need for a strategic approach for HRD to win customer satisfaction by means of enhancing job satisfaction and effective organizational commitment selecting Pottuvil, Amapara in the East cost of Sri Lanka as the research location. Using stratified sampling methods, 66 sample units were formed out of more than 1,000 of SMES engaged in different types of business ventures in the location. Primary data were collected using a questionnaire and structured interviews and were analyzed using SPSS 20 version. This study used a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) model to build a matrix to guide the suitable HRD practices to adopt in the tourism SMEs. Findings show that both internal factor-based HRD strategies as well as external factor-based HRD strategies grounded in the SWOT matrix. This study suggests that some long-term and short-term policy implementations are needed to enhance the performance of the human resource in the tourism sector in Sri Lanka's Eastern Province.

Keywords: Sustainable tourism, human resource development, SWOT matrix

Developing sustainable marketing framework for world heritage sites in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Throughout the world, over the last three decades, the concept of sustainability has received more attention among academics, practitioners, and policy makers because it is more essential for the success and the survival of the world. To achieve sustainability as a whole, the contribution of the main actors of a country is essential. The emergence of the sustainability concept in marketing management caused a revolution in the field paving the way to achieve sustainable marketing management. Nevertheless, the marketing managers of the public sector and private sector have a very significant role in the decision-making to consider the pillars of sustainable marketing to gain long-term consistent growth of the business. The people in society also have a role to play as consumers in the path of sustainability. Only the contributions by the public and private sectors are not a panacea for sustainability. This study focuses on developing a sustainable marketing framework for world heritage sites in Sri Lanka covering consumers, the private sector, and the public sector those who are the main actors of a country. The main objective of this study is to establish a sustainable marketing framework for world heritage sites. A mixed method was used during research design. Data was collected through field interviews and surveys. A questionnaire was sent to a sample chosen through systematic random sampling. The response rate was 71 percent. The purposive sampling method has been employed to identify the ideal persons to be subjected to face an interview from government departments. In combination with observation and literature, it shows the clear differences in sustainable marketing awareness and practices of the societies between developed countries and developing countries. The conclusion offers meaningful implications for decision-makers and marketers to achieve long-term sustainable marketing.

Keywords: Sustainability, marketing, world heritage site, decision making, marketing framework

Sustainable camping tourism: awareness and practices of proper waste disposal on camping site in South Korea

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Abstract

After COVID-19 pandemic hit the tourism industry, camping became a preferred outdoor recreation activity in South Korea because of its low virus transmission potential compared to other tourism activities. With the number of campers increasing, waste generation at camping sites has also increased to a considerable amount. Therefore, to reduce the environmental impact it is identified that the campers' awareness on practices of proper waste disposal must be increased. This study was conducted to apprehend the levels of campers' awareness and practices on proper waste disposal. To achieve these objectives, a survey of campers in South Korea was conducted from March to June in 2022. After collecting data from 131 respondents, the relationship between campers' awareness and practices on waste disposal was examined. The finding showed that campers were well aware of environmental quality and waste disposal at the camping site. However, they had less awareness towards proper waste disposal polices and guidelines. On the other hand, campers had overall good understanding about the practices on proper waste disposal. In contrast, awareness of proper waste disposal of the campers did not influence their practice of bring their waste back home and not throwing at camping site. This study suggests the necessity to imply proper regulations and a system of guideline that can easily to applied at all camping sites. The research findings also encourage the campers to bring their waste back home without throwing waste at the camping site and to use reusable camping products.

Keywords: Camping tourism, waste disposal, awareness and practice, environmental quality, tourism sustainability

Tea as an approach for sustainable tourism in Meghalaya

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Abstract

The newest idea being promoted in India is tea tourism. Tourists are urged to book accommodations at homestays and bungalows with tea gardens. Countries like China, Sri Lanka, and Kenya have experienced a boom in tea tourism. Tea tourism is an activity that combines visiting a tea garden's natural setting with picking tea leaves, producing tea, packaging it, and learning about the distinctive culture of the tea garden. Three significant locations in India now produce some of the best teas in the world: Assam, Darjeeling, and Nilgiris. Meghalaya has been producing high-quality organic tea in addition to gradually catching up to Assam and Darjeeling in terms of output. Tea farming and small homestay ventures in rural Meghalaya have a great chance of enhancing local livelihoods, expanding rural economies, and tackling socioeconomic challenges. The objective of the present study is to depict tea as a mode of sustainable tourism and how it can help in sustainable socioeconomic development of Meghalaya. This study was based on secondary sources and dedicated fieldwork by interviewing owners of small tea gardens, government officials, and observation of the host community. They will be relevant for practitioners in terms of identifying key issues and solutions encountered in small tea gardens. It will also provide an opportunity to analyze the rural tourism potential through tea tourism involving the local communities. As an agricultural product with strong social and cultural connotations, the production and consumption of tea have high potential to enhance community livelihood sustainability in tourism settings.

Keywords: Tea, tea-tourism, tourists, sustainable tourism, tea-gardens

Rethinking sustainable tourism in Sri Lanka: A PESTEL Analysis

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Abstract

Over the years, sustainable tourism has emerged as one of the success stories of the tourism sector and policy-making at the national and regional levels for tourism development. The recent critical situations and economic crisis have posed significant challenges to the tourism sector. Sustainable tourism development is a strategic move to lessen the negative social, economic, and environmental effects of tourism. Therefore, this research focused on reconsidering concepts for creating a sustainable tourism at the regional and national levels in Sri Lanka. The study investigated the key PESTEL aspects and background processes of sustainable development at the regional and national levels for sustainable tourism. This is followed by a critical debate on evolved sustainable growth and rethinking of tourism sector in Sri Lanka. The PESTEL analysis was used to study the influences of the factors on the regional and national tourism development. The qualitative approach was employed to evaluate the PESTEL variables using secondary source of information from regional and national level tourism and the perception of tourism implementation agencies and stakeholder were studied through interviews. The analysis emphasizes the importance of the analysis of PESTEL variables at the regional and national levels in identifying policy solutions. This study recommended a framework that supports sustainable tourism growth based on PESTEL analysis and this study has evaluated the tourism success and revisited the policy solutions to meet the potential of sustainable tourism. Several other policy suggestions are also made in order to address the mounting pressure on tourism growth as well as to ensure that tourism development is a long-term vision.

Keywords: PESTEL, tourism sector, sustainable tourism, regional and national development

Port-led tourism development; Prospects for Sri Lanka

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Abstract

The study focused on examining the trends of port-led tourism development, and analyzing its opportunities and challenges and how it can facilitate a faster development path for tourist destinations like Sri Lanka. The study is based on secondary data and analyzed against a theoretical framework constructed on theory of international connectivity, development theory with special focus on sustainable development, neoliberalism and theories of international tourism in order to address the research problem and fulfill objectives of the research. The study revealed that, at present, maritime connectivity is one of the biggest infrastructure endeavors that both littoral and non-littoral states across the world are equally investing in, with maritime connectivity projects amounting to 1,200 \$ million being undertaken within the South Asian region alone. Improved connectivity can significantly enhance regional economy and most connected countries can expect their GDP growth to increase up to 40% more than less connected countries. It is recommended that in order to maximize opportunities extended by these massive infrastructure projects, Sri Lanka should adopt port-led development strategies and its trends spilling over to the tourism sector leading to a popularity in port-led tourism developments. Cruise tourism is one of the fastest growing segments of tourism, with an average annual growth rate of 7.4%. The market amounted to 28.5 million cruisers traveling across the globe generating a revenue \$18 billion by the end of 2018. The industry globally represented roughly \$133.4 billion in economic impact, \$43.73 billion in wages and 939,000 jobs in 2017, and figures only continue to rise. Current trends observed in port infrastructure development such as increasing private sector investment, increasing greenfield and brownfield investments, port cities, dry ports and inland connectivity and eco-friendly port cultures have created a conducive environment for cruise tourism to thrive upon. In the context of Sri Lanka, keeping to its national strategy of maritime connectivity; promoting of Sri Lanka as a logistics hub, an export/import service hub and a transshipment management hub, adopting a port-led tourism development strategy will be of benefit.

Keywords: Port-led development, maritime connectivity, cruise tourism

Impact and sustenance of rural tourism; A case study of Pragpur Village India

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Abstract

After the Covid-19 wave, the Global Tourism Community has witnessed major changes in tourist behavior. Culture, Religious, Adventure, Nature, Rural and Agro Tourism sites become priorities with creativity and innovation. Experiential Tourism is upcoming. Indigenous – led tourism fosters reconciliation by providing deeper understanding of a culture. Himachal is known for different cultures like Chamba, Kangra, Kinnaur, Lahauli, Gaddi, Pangwal, Khampa etc. The present paper is an outcome of a study carried out by Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management (IITTM) with the funding from Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India at Pragpur village notified as a Heritage village situated in Kangra. This village was founded in the late 16 century. Inhabitants in the area are craftsman, weavers, basket makers, silver smiths, painters etc. This study is an attempt to find out the impact of culture on tourism and explores the various areas of Rural Tourism where the Public Private and People Partnership (PPP) can wedlock and develop into a role model for Rural Tourism. This paper concludes the best practices being followed at Pragpur Village with the recommendations for make it more tourist friendly destination.

Keywords: Tourist behavior, indigenous, rural tourism, best practices, tourist friendly

A comparative analysis of standards of major global certification bodies with GSTC destination criteria

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Abstract

Global benchmarking and certification standards have been evolved as a tool for total quality management in destinations. These standards are widely used in a number of countries and have become an assurance of destination quality worldwide. The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) is the apex organization playing the pivotal role in designing global standards, criteria and indicators for destinations and tourism industry worldwide on which many recognized standards and accredited certification bodies have been developed. With a large number of standards and certification agencies available, destination boards may be in a dilemma to choose a certifier that is apt for the sustainable initiatives implemented by the destination. Hence, there is need for research on a comparative analysis of major criteria and indicators of these certifiers. This paper presents a detailed analysis of four major global certifiers whose full standard is publicly available. This study will help destinations to have an overview of the different standards, their criteria and indicators and do a self-analysis on how far they have performed in various sustainability themes and choose accordingly a certifier.

Keywords: Destination certification, Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), accredited certification bodies, recognized certification standards

Analysis on the condition of selected tourist park attraction in Manila, as perceived by the respondents in new normal: Inputs to developing strategic model

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Abstract

During the COVID-19 pandemic, hospitality industry was one of the most affected Industries in the world due to its chain effect because the main markets are people. As the time goes by, everything has changed and the tourism and hospitality sector needs to adapt to that change therefore, this study analyses the current situation of the selected tourist parks in Manila to define the nature and scope of the situation. Thus, this will help them to identify different strategies to overcome the problem while being in this pandemic situation. It will point out where to improve while following safety protocols provide more security and assistance to the vicinity. This study used a quantitative and employ a descriptive-comparative research approach. The researchers used self-made questionnaires as an element to collect enough data to support this study. The main respondents of this study are the Visitors and workers because they are the ones who can give the proper knowledge in the survey. They will take a huge part in the data gathering procedure. 380 respondents gave their consent to help us determine the current situation of the said parks in this study. This will also be helpful in maintaining its sustainability as well as promoting the tourists' destinations in Manila.

Keywords: Tourism, tourist park attraction, pandemic, perspective, Manila

Rethinking of tourism marketing: An analysis of European women travelers in promoting Sri Lanka as a tourist destination

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Abstract

With core objective of identifying and analyzing the methods and resources to promote Sri Lanka as a tourist destination among European women travelers, the present study attempts to examine the nature of perspectives maintained by current European women travelers on Sri Lanka, to analyze influential factors that determine and formulate their destination image perception, experience and as well as customer satisfaction and finally to make due recommendations. Data were collected through a questionnaire circulated among 50 female foreign tourists who visited Sri Lanka with the assistance of five leading local travel agencies, and the sets of data were analyzed using Excel. Key findings indicated to the need for urgent action to put in place modern and sophisticated safety measures to ensure the safety of European women travellers despite the fact that customer perspective on Sri Lanka as a tourist destination is currently ranked positive. There is also a need for increased capacity building mechanism to ensure local tour guides are better trained and equipped with knowledge with regard to handling issues pertaining to safety concerns of foreign female tourists.

Keywords: European women travelers, tourism promotion, travel packages

An investigation into the relationship of 5As on domestic tourists' satisfaction in Anuradhapura cultural heritage site

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Abstract

Domestic tourism, despite having been recognized unwaveringly as a vital component in the tourism industry, has not yet been able to develop to its fullest potent in Sri Lanka. Simultaneous existence of these two contradictory phenomena could be understood through an investigation into factors that influenced domestic tourists' satisfaction. This study is intended to identify the relationship between 5A's of tourism – Accommodation, Amenities, Attractions, Accessibility, and Activities and domestic tourists' satisfaction with reference to the Anuradhapura cultural heritage site, a destination distinctively popular among domestic tourists. Data were collected using a five-point Likert scale questionnaire that had been circulated among 100 domestic tourists to the research site. The 100 domestic tourist respondents were selected using a simple random sample and the questionnaire had been devised to contain questions that were drafted covering the 5As as independent variables and domestic tourist satisfaction as the dependent variable. The study found that attractions, accommodations and activities influenced satisfaction of domestic tourists at the Anuradhapura cultural heritage site.

Keywords: 5As, tourist attractions, cultural heritage, cultural triangle, tourist's satisfaction

Study on challenges and potentials in plant-based vegan food culture: Evidence from four-star hotels in the Southern Province, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Plant-based diets have become popular as a means of reducing the environmental footprint of the diet and promoting human health and animal welfare. Plant-based Vegan Food Culture is a new trend in the development of world tourism. Plant-based culinary traditions of Sri Lanka have been in existence for centuries, as they were influenced by a large number of factors, including customs of Buddhism and Hinduism, climatic conditions and geographical location, the economic well-being of countries, and the degree of influence of other cultures. Sri Lanka is one of the most vegan-friendly destinations in the world. The main objective of this study is to identify the challenges and potentials of Plant-based Vegan Food Culture in Four-star hotels in the Southern Province of Sri Lanka. The purposive sample method was used to collect data. Primary data were collected using structured questionnaires and focus group interviews. Findings show that Sri Lanka as a destination still not performing to its potential with Plant-based vegan Food Culture in tourism practices compared to India and Japan, despite the fact that Lankan variety of vegetables and spicy food has high demand from food lovers. Hotel management is yet to identify and capture this special food-related market. The findings also call for the need of introducing new plant-based vegan menu items to hotel schools' training and developing school-level curricula to inform newcomers to the industry. There is also need for effective marketing campaigns and offer attractive packages to get more attention from customers.

Keywords: Plant-based Vegan Food Culture, food tourism in Sri Lanka

Application of grading system for wellness centers in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Wellness tourism is to maintain and promote a tourist's health. Sri Lanka needs a star rating system or grading system for wellness centres to help tourists to choose the best wellness experience in their tour to Sri Lanka. Wellness centres and hotels in Sri Lanka need to be well maintained with unique standardization to promote their services. Therefore, it is essential to have standardized system so that they can easily choose the facilities they prefer. When comparing with other countries such as India, Sri Lanka offers authentic wellness programs in the most comfortable settings with in beautifully designed wellness centres. Therefore, if Sri Lanka also can develop a suitable categorization with a perfect grading system for these wellness centers the quality of services can be enhanced without any droughts or problems. Choosing an appropriate location which would suit their budget and their requirement would be made simple and time saving for the traveler. This failure of not having a standardized grading system for our wellness centres motivated to carry out this research. This research focused on investigating current standard maintained by the existing wellness centres and create a specific new grading system according to findings of current best practices of wellness centres in Sri Lanka considering the physical, mental and spiritual aspects of wellness tourism. The literature review supported to identify criteria for grading or star rating systems for leisure economic hotels in Sri Lankan and global scenario. The questionnaire was developed with related criteria from the literature review and used to conduct personal direct interviews in wellness centres in Sri Lanka. This research has created a classification system which will standardize the wellness products that help to improve the quality of service of wellness tourism in Sri Lanka. Maintaining a high quality of service is crucial to attract high end tourists seeking wellness tourism. This system of grading will also help to popularize our tourism industry among our competitors and increase the flow of foreign currency to the island. This research highly recommends the application of grading system as a solution to control misconduct and malpractices in wellness tourism in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Wellness tourism, standardization, grading system, classification, quality service

Are travelers influenced by word-of-mouth in choosing fast food restaurants in Sri Lanka?

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Abstract

Increased recognition of communication mode ‘Word of mouth’ as an exceptionally influential marketing strategy is often discussed citing the examples of rapid proliferation of fast food consumption and the growth of international and local brands mostly thanks to persons passing information to his fellow men. Fast food culture, that became popular in Sri Lanka with the increased numbers of visitors and travellers, continues to grow alongside the fact that different food consumption behaviours are usually determined by the differences of culture, geography, environment and climate – one main supportive factor for the growth is ‘Word of mouth’ (WOM) which has more reliability than commercial advertisements. This study analyzes the impact of WOM on promotion of various brands of fast food restaurants in Sri Lanka. Previous research on marketing concepts brand personality, brand trust, and brand love, has been consulted to identify their interconnectedness with WOM. Data were collected through a questionnaire survey among tourists on their choice of fast food restaurants. The study notes several diverse concerns in terms of brand quality, attitudes toward the brand, and intentions of future behaviour, trust, attachment, commitment, persuasion and affect. Effects of branding (personality, love, and trust) of fast food restaurant using WOM among tourists were analyzed. SPSS has been used to evaluate data. The three factors; Brand Personality, Brand Love and Brand Trust are related to WOM in the increased success in promotion of fast food brands.

Keywords: Brand personality, brand love, brand trust, Word of Mouth, fast food industry

Influence of tourist police service quality and service culture on tourist's travel confidence on destination

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Abstract

Safety and security are vital to providing service quality in tourism. More than any other economic activity, the success or failure of a tourism destination depends on being able to provide a safe and secure environment for visitors with enhanced facilities and services. Crime, wars, social and political unrests, environmental threats and the spread of infectious diseases are just some of the most common forms of threats to safe and secure tourism. All forms of security incidents have negatively affected their image and can cause a decline in tourist arrivals. Safety is the set of precautions put in place to prevent tourists and industry workers from being exposed to situations where they believe that they are in personal danger, due to crime, accidents, and emergencies. For progressive destination development in the parlance of tourism, the destinations have to have an image of utmost safety and tourist friendliness. Hence, rethinking of tourism police plans and straggles and best practices to enhance the services is regarded as the need of the hour. Therefore, the objective of this study was to analyse the current issues and challenges in enhancing tourism police to ensure a safe and secure travel for tourists in Sri Lanka and to examine the effectiveness of tourism police and their performance standards at various regions in Sri Lanka. To achieve the above objective the following research methodology has been employed by detecting the factors through primary and secondary data collection of field survey and comparing them across the order to minimize errors in data collection and analysis. Owing to this, survey and interview (structured and unstructured) were chosen for data collection and secondary data collected from Sri Lanka Tourism Police division, travel and tourism sector, trade associations, community associated with tourism, tourist information offices, and websites of various tourism organizations/ institutions/ bodies. The key findings of the study depict that the Sri Lanka Police (SLP) at present is having 16 Tourism units with the staff enrolment of 140 and there is a shortage of officers. SLP is planning to restructure the Tourist Police division with new command structure consisting of 26 Divisional Tourist Police Bureau and 31 Tourist Police Bureaus at various places

throughout the country with 1067 total strength. However, even with the new structure proposed the absence of units in some important newly developing tourism areas are noticeable. It is also found that most of the police officers are lacking proper skill, training, awareness, knowledge about the tourism field and great shortage of needed equipment for the TPD as proper logistical facilities. This study recommends to increasing police presence at all popular tourist destinations from Colombo to the south and central highlands, enhance network access with emigration and customs for any of the matters such as tracing records, verifications on immigration details and previous custom declarations etc. provide awareness for police officers/ local tourist service providers and other involvers to enhance the services.

Keywords: Tourist Police services, safety and security, tourist, tourism

Impact of social media on marketing of domestic tourism among Sri Lankan youth

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Abstract

Today the role of social media has gained importance in the tourism industry as in the case of all other spheres of human lifestyle. Most of us search information and rely on social media in making decisions on tourism-related preferences. Youth are the mostly influenced by the social media as well as the highest number of frequent users and visitors to social media platforms. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and other social networking sites now have become the leading sources to find information about tourism in Sri Lanka. Travel agencies, advertising firms, proprietors and staff members of hotels and resorts find social media as a powerful source to communicate with the rest of the world about their tourism opportunities. The primary objective of this study is to review the importance of social media on tourism marketing by analyzing how youth rely on social networking sites when making tourism based decisions. In order to achieve that objective, survey analysis technique has been used for data collection and university and college students of Sri Lanka have been considered for the survey. The survey results show that youth are influenced by the social media marketing and their tourism preferences are influenced by the reviews and feedback accessible to them through social media platforms. The survey results also states that there are both positive and negative impacts by social media on tourism marketing. Proper handling of social media, hiring staffs with social media skills for effective management of enterprises' official accounts, could minimize the negative impacts.

Keywords: Tourism marketing, social networking sites, youth and social media

Rethinking of approaches towards destination management; Integrated or isolated in the case of Anuradhapura district

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Abstract

Anuradhapura District claims the possession of the world's first wildlife sanctuary in Mihinthale, and Anuradhapura city is the first planned city of the country. Its popularity for tourism was confirmed by 70.86 percent room occupancy rate through 77,703 visitations by local and foreign tourists in 2018. Anuradhapura is already popular as a cultural and heritage tourism destination, with an immense potential for ecotourism, wellness tourism and agritourism. The area is included in national, subnational and local, area based and sectoral plans that have been devised for tourism development. In this regard it is required to address the 5A's of tourism - accessibility, amenities, accommodation, attractions and activities. In this context, the present study is intended to identify the extent to which the 5As have been incorporated in the relevant national, area-based and sectoral plans. A qualitative methodology was adopted, and four national, three district/area-based and six sectoral plans were assessed against the 5As. Results indicated that intention to increase the accessibility factor was high, and this component was addressed in all the plans, followed by amenities. Activity development focused on nature based, low-impact activities. In terms of attractions, the study observed that wellness tourism and agritourism, with high potential for development were not addressed in sectoral plans. It was noted that despite accommodation being addressed in all plans, obtaining accreditation from National Sustainable Tourism Certification scheme or registration with SLTDA were not discussed. It is recommended to assess the feasibility of above activities with health, agriculture and irrigation sectoral authorities and for SLTDA to take up an advocacy role to assess the potentiality and provide capacity building for relevant authorities.

Keywords: Integrated planning approach, Tourism planning, Anuradhapura

A study on the impact of service quality on destination satisfaction among tourists visiting Sri Lanka

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Abstract

The present study is aimed at examining the impact of service quality on destination satisfaction with reference to tourism industry in Sri Lanka. Five dimensions of service quality namely assurance, reliability, responsiveness, tangible facilities and empathy and their impact on destination satisfaction in Sri Lankan tourism industry were empirically evaluated. Data that had been collected using a questionnaire circulated among a sample of 300 foreign tourists visiting Sri Lanka were analyzed with the assistance of SPSS 21.0. A factor analysis carried out to measure reliability and validity of the study. It was followed by descriptive, correlation and regression analysis to examine how various dimensions of service quality effect on destination satisfaction. Findings indicate to the need for the management level decision makers of the tourism industry to rethink on how to improve service quality by creating value as it would help promoting client retention in the context of attracting new customers is more expensive and time consuming. It has been observed that there are new trends such as increasingly competitive market, expansion of consumer rights, emergence of quality conscious tourists, etc. In the face of increasing competitiveness, hotel companies could make use of service quality as a source for competitive advantage.

Keyword: Service quality, creating value, tourism

Promoting Galle Face as an attractive street food destination

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Abstract

There is a significant increase in the number of street food sellers in the Colombo-Galle Face area recently with foreigners as well as locals enjoying food exploration and nightlife in the city coupled with amazing ambiance. However, Covid-19 Pandemic has made things difficult for street food vendors. This research attempts to identify the importance of street food promotion as an attractive destination in order to boost tourism in Sri Lanka. It also focuses to improve the status of street food sellers in the Colombo area and identify various methods to promote their products. A Qualitative research method has been employed to collect data from street food vendors in the Galle Face and consumers there. Primary data were collected through interviews with vendors and consumers. Moreover, literature available on the experiences of the countries with an international reputation for street food tourism such as Indonesia, Pakistan and Thailand were reviewed to collect secondary data. The study finds for the importance of dealing with emerging challenges in relation to adhering to health guidelines while preserving the qualities of street food culture to build trust among consumers. As the global pandemic has affected every street food destination worldwide, Sri Lanka can gain a competitive advantage by introducing new safe street food culture. The study recommends government participation in order to promote street food and encourage vendors and investors to develop a creative experience-enhancing Sri Lankan street food culture.

Keywords: Tourism, street food promotion, marketing

An analysis of promotional strategies of wellness tourism in North Central Province, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Wellness tourism is one of the fast-growing industries in both international and domestic tourism. Wellness tourism goes beyond relaxation and spa tourism. Wellness travelers are willing to keep a healthy way of life, reduce mental stress, prevent diseases, and upgrade their general physical and mental well-being. The pandemic and economic crises, tourism industry was slowed down by risking millions of jobs. The wellness tourism industry is also impacted at the same level by hygienic and safety issues but for rebuilding the tourism industry the support of wellness tourism also essential because, wellness travelers are high yield tourists. Identifying new wellness promotion areas are important in promoting wellness tourism-based destination. North Central Province (NCP) is one of the most tourist attraction destinations with potentials. However, Sri Lanka fail to tap the potential as well as to provide adequate facilities to promote wellness tourism. This research focus to study the current issues in NCP's wellness tourism market, identify current trends and patterns to arrive tourists in NCP, and potentials that determines wellness tourism with Sri Lankan authenticity and identity of NCP. To achieve above objectives, primary data collected based on direct interviews and questionnaire survey from selected respondents such as tour guides, travel agents, hoteliers, foreigners and wellness center staffs. Narrative analysis and stakeholder analysis were adapted to identify existing gap within the province and identify actions to promote wellness tourism linking the appropriate stakeholders. This research identified the potentials need for promotion of wellness tourism in NCP of Sri Lanka as a wellness destination and key drivers of inter and intra connectivity of wellness tourism industry. This framework can also be applied for branding regional wellness destination with their own provincial authenticity.

Keywords: Wellness tourism, promotion, North Central province, tourism megatrends, authenticity

An analysis of promotional strategies on MICE tourism in Colombo City, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

MICE is an acronym for Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions/Events and includes business tourism, tourism for meetings, congresses and exhibitions. The MICE segment is one of the fastest growing components of the tourism industry and the total international market share of MICE is in excess of USD 270 billion and its output accounts for about 1% of global GDP. Colombo being a capital of Sri Lanka has many facilities for urban MICE nightlife tourism but when look at the arrival of MICE Tourist it takes only 11 %. Colombo has more supporting facilities for MICE tourism namely Conference halls like BMICH, Convention center, Excel world, Lotus pond, Viharamahadevi park, Independence Square and Hotel's conference halls with 3 to 5 stars Hotels. Further, shopping experience starting from Pettha to Colombo luxurious shopping malls like Colombo City Center, One Gall Face, Crescat boulevard, MC, upcoming Odel mall, Dutch Hospital. However, MICE tourism insignificant in Colombo City. Therefore, this research focused on identifying existing MICE tourism opportunities & challenges to expand MICE business in Colombo. Based on the literature review there are five success factors were identified namely, Business Motivation, Product Diversification, Place, Price, Market Strategy related to MICE tourism. Questionnaire and formal discussions with selected stakeholders carried out to identify existing opportunities and challenges to expand MICE Tourism in Colombo City. Basic statistic and narrative analysis were adopted to identify future development opportunities to develop MICE tourism. Sri Lanka has already begun its journey towards being a hub for MICE tourism with many new infrastructural developments taking place that will bolster the industry and making great progress in infrastructure expansion and it is necessary to expand our product and services offering to maximize the potential of this sector. Sri Lanka is a cost efficient and attractive destination for global conferences, corporate events and incentive travel. However, it is also imperative that consistent and strategic promotions are carried out to attract target markets. Colombo MICE Tourism is vital for economy

development and that should be marketed in a right way by using reliable marketing strategies. MICE industry should value customers' needs, design intimate service, improve specialist training for internal staff, and actively participate in international MICE associations or activities to promote enterprise popularity and endeavor to jointly organize. A sole controlling department or authority should be established in the future, which may enhance, plan and integrate, and monitor the outcomes and achievements of the implementation of MICE projects in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: MICE Tourism, Infrastructure Development, Colombo City, Diversification

Potentials and prospects of sports tourism in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Sports tourism is fastest developing sub-sector of the global tourism industry. Sports tourism is traveling in order to observe or participate in a sporting event. In 2018, Sri Lanka has attracted only 0.5% of international tourist of sports tourism. It is almost a niche market improving Sri Lanka sports tourism sector with economic value and social benefits that can be generated in many ways linked with sports and recreational activities and bring civic pride to the host community of facilitating and volunteering to sport related activities, events or competitions. When compared with the region, Sri Lanka is under performing in tourism sector specially in sports tourism. Therefore, this research has examined the reasons for low performance and strategies to develop sport tourism to attract sports tourists to Sri Lanka. This study also focused on identifying new segments to create destination image that is favorable for sports tourism while enhancing local host community's social, cultural and economic standards. Based on literature review the best practices of sport tourism have been documented and formal and informal interviews were conducted with selecting stakeholders related to sport tourism. Qualitative analysis adopted to identify gaps of the industry to promote sport tourism in Sri Lanka. The research found that the lack of sport tourism sector facilitators, lack of attention to market sport tourism in Sri Lanka, very limited number of stakeholders engaging in sport tourism, no proper collaboration between Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority and Sports Ministry, lack of adventure sports facilitators, lack of skilled human resources, cost of event organizing were the key reasons for underperforming in sport tourism in Sri Lanka among many other reasons. This study also has recommended implementable strategies to promote Sri Lanka as a sport tourism destination.

Keywords: Sports tourism, tourism development, global experience

Rethinking of vocational tourism education in Sri Lanka: An analysis of post COVID-19

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Abstract

The pandemic highlighted the critical need towards the rethinking tourism. In transforming the tourism industry, vocational tourism education plays a critical part in the social protection systems that form the foundation for resilience and prosperity. In Sri Lanka, the subjects of pandemic and the vocational tourism education remain relatively under-explored. Skillful labour force is one of the paramount factors that decide the smoothness of the hospitality and tourism industry. The role played by vocational tourism education is vital in empowering labour force with professional knowledge and skills demanded by the industry. This study aims to investigate the impacts of pandemic on vocational tourism education in Sri Lanka. It has adopted a qualitative approach. A sample size of ten educators who studied at the vocational tourism training institutions was used with convenience sampling techniques for primary data collection. Publications, research articles, books, web sites were perused to collect secondary data. A narrative analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data that were obtained through structured interviews. The results indicated that vocational tourism education was affected negatively due to pandemic. Recommendations drawn from the educators and global best practices on vocational tourism education during the pandemic may be useful for policy makers, government officers attached to the ministries of education and skills development, vocational, research and innovations and vocational training authorities to uplift vocational tourism education in Sri Lanka. It is suggested that changes in curriculum design, industry collaboration, and excellence in research are needed in order to ambidextrous management in tourism education to be adopted in post pandemic phase.

Keywords: COVID-19 pandemic, vocational tourism education, curriculum design, industry collaboration

Impacts of social media on the behavior of Sri Lankan tourists

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Abstract

As a rapidly expanding industry all over the world, tourism not only plays a significant part in the Gross Domestic Product of both developing and developed nations, but it also plays a significant role in the global economy overall. The adoption and practice of social media can be recognized as a remarkable successful achievement in today's business world. It's a paradigm shifts in the business transaction in how consumers virtually connect and disseminate information, precise and share ideas with each other, and even interact with virtual products in the tourism industry. Moreover, social media platforms have changed into substantial tourist knowledge networks and intention of consumption. The impacts of social media on travel and tourism has been described in several aspects. A sufficient number of studies aim to disclose the role and impact of social media on aspects of tourists' behavior before, during, and after their consumption. However, this study aims to reveal the impacts of social media on the behavior of Sri Lankan tourists and what type of social media platforms and contents have the significant impact on Sri Lankan tourists. The qualitative research method was used. The population and sample of this study consists of Sri Lankan tourists who traveled to local destinations as well as foreign tourism destinations. 120 Sri Lankan tourists were randomly selected using a convenient sampling technique with primary and secondary sources. The results showed that Sri Lankan tourists are significantly influenced by selected social media and its contents with electronic word of mouth. Further, the social media empowered travel decision making model is being put forward as a way to understand how social media is used and how it affects decision making process. There are a number of things that this means for practice and new areas for future research.

Keywords: Behavior, social media platforms, tourism and tourists

Effect of website quality on tourist satisfaction and return intention in e-commerce websites

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Abstract

The goal of this study was to determine the impact of website quality on consumer satisfaction and the purchase intent. Because of the significant technological advancements, the use of E-commerce has grown dramatically in recent years. In an e-commerce business, website quality is a major factor of client satisfaction. The emphasis is on websites that sell travel tickets online. This research is based on a quantitative evaluation of the website quality of online travel ticket booking websites. The descriptive statistics, reliability, and validity were examined using SMART PLS. This study conceptualizes the relationship between many elements influencing website quality and user purchasing intentions. Information quality, system quality, E-service quality, and website design are the most important indicators of website quality. The findings of this study assist E-commerce enterprises in retaining customers and thereby gaining long-term value for the organization. Because competition is severe in e-commerce businesses, it is critical that customers have a positive experience and return frequently in order to produce value for the brand. The study's findings show that information quality and customer satisfaction are critical factors in favorable user perceptions of purchase intent in online ticket booking websites. Research reveals system quality, E-service quality, and website design all have an effect on customer satisfaction, although the effect is less significant.

Keywords: Customer satisfaction, website quality, purchase intention, travel websites

Redesigning of training and development practices for hospitality sector to improve guest satisfaction

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Abstract

Hotel employees are continuously facing challenges to keep guests satisfied in their hospitality establishments. Skills of staff members play a vital role in establishing and maintaining customer satisfaction as described by many authors. Customers will be delighted with the perceived services by the staff and when their expectations exceed. The most satisfied guests are always tend to return and it will directly enhance the income and brand name of the establishment. Training is a structured process in which people develop knowledge and abilities to assist them satisfy the needs of their current and prospective future professions. Employee development is a comprehensive long-term process that assists the business in growing and meeting the needs of current and future guests. In this study it is expected to find out training needs and practices and to redesign training and development of hospitality sector to establish and maintain guest satisfaction. Both primary and secondary data were used in the study. Frontline staff of Colombo city hotels were selected as the population and 145 staff members were randomly selected as the study sample. Data collection was done using five-point Likert scale questioner and analyzed using spss. Results revealed on the job trainings, interactive sessions and self-study goals as most effective training practices which leads to guest satisfaction in hospitality industry. The study's conclusions will be beneficial to hotel owners, trainers, and staff in the hospitality industry. Further the research suggests future studies covering all tourist regions in the country as well as all the employee categories.

Keywords: Training and development, guest satisfaction, training needs

Sustainable tourism obstructive factors in post pandemic: Are MSMEs in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka facing business problems?

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Abstract

The major objective of the study was to investigate the issues related to micro small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the tourism industry in the Eastern province of Sri Lanka. Tourism industry one of the major sources of employment and income for the country. The industry contributed to the employment steadily over the last few years till the hit of pandemic. However, Sri Lanka tourism has gone downhill and the country's political turmoil also in recent past also created a backward drop of the industry. As a result, most of the MSMEs in the tourism businesses such as restaurants, hotels, stays, small shops, transporting organizations etc. all were affected and their business is not lucrative. In order to bring their business issues to the light, researcher conducted twenty-three interviews among the proprietors and owners of these MSMEs in the region. The interviews were transcribed and thematic analysis was used to analyze the qualitative information. Four themes namely general problems toward the market, marketing product and services, human resources issues and training and development were used for the analysis. Findings revealed that the MSMEs associated with the tourism industry in the region have been affected due to the COVID pandemic and economic turmoil of the country. General problems faced by the industry is that their business is at risk now as they are not attracted by any new customers in these days. As the inflation is also skyrocketing in the country, they are unable to face the increasing cost of production of their services. The findings further revealed that marketing related problems of their business. Production problems due to price increase caused by the inflation. MSMEs promoted their business and products to the tourists. The cost of promotion is currently very high and they are unable to promote their services to the market even through digital media as most of the MSMEs in the region are not familiar with digital marketing techniques. In the case of human resources, MSMEs are facing severe problems as employees leave the organizations and find jobs abroad to safeguard their livelihood due to the current economic crisis of the country. In

addition, MSMEs are also unable to pay the compensation to the employees due to the current economic crisis of the country backed by the increased cost of production and less profitability. This issues now led to shortage of labour. The findings of the study also revealed that these MSMEs require business coaching on finding new opportunities and innovative practices in business to be adapted enabling the MSMEs to improve their businesses in lucrative manner. The study also recommends that the MSMEs should generally be given business coaching facilities to uplift their business.

Keywords: MSME, sustainable tourism, business coaching, obstructive factors

Post-disaster recovery strategies in tourism, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Disasters have different characteristics and impacts; however, disasters have a common element, which is their severity. Natural disasters are occurring due to natural forces and man-made disasters are those disasters that result from human activities. In the recent past Sri Lanka has been experiencing an increase in disasters. Its frequency and impacts are alarming, considerably affecting the economy and development. The business world is directly influenced by various external factors, namely, global, economic, sociocultural, demographic, political and technological. Hybrid disasters are those disasters that result from both natural and man-made causes. As a developing country Sri Lanka could not ignore those valuable resources which brings more economical strength to the country. Therefore, this research attempted to identify factors influence for tourists to travel in disaster situation and to identify strategies to recover tourism industry after post disaster situation. Based on a comprehensive literature review identified factors influence for tourist to travel in disaster situation. Questionnaire survey consisted with three parts demographic profile of the responder, the visitor's knowledge and desires of the security of the nation, suggestions to improve and resilient building of Sri Lankan tourism during disasters like Easter sunday attack and COVID-19. Sample consisted with 60 respondents of tourists. Both descriptive and correlation analysis methods were used to analyze the data. The software Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 20.0 was employed to analyze the data and generate useful finding. The co-actions have been taken today for disaster risk reduction and climate action interventions are Sendai framework for disaster risk reduction, Paris climate agreement and all relevant authorities established by Sri Lankan government to get required actions under government policies. One strategy to adopting new technologies and equipment's to understand the future disaster levels and communicate those to relevant parties to avoid bad experiences for tourists. Enhancing and development of infrastructure ex: airport facilities, travel facilities, highway facilities. The conclusion of this study in nut shell, managing disasters is a combination of avoiding and mitigating the effect by human actions and healing the disaster effect by time and the disaster itself.

Keywords: Disaster, tourism industry, post disaster strategies

Rethinking of women participation in hospitality industry: A case study on tourism in Kalpitiya, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Women's participation in tourism industry has taken a significant position in tourism discourse as the 21st century is witnessing an increasing number of tourist movements across the world. Tourism industry has shown an enormous potential to expand and grow in the next few years in Sri Lanka. As per the Tourism Development Strategy of Sri Lanka, the industry is anticipated to be the leading foreign exchange earner by 2030. This study is aimed at finding determining factors of female participation and non-participation in tourism industry paying special attention to the hospitality industry in Kalpitiya Pradeshiya Sabha local government authority area in in the North Western Province of Sri Lanka. In search of those determining factors a qualitative approach had been adopted and primary data were collected through a self-administered structured questionnaire. The research sample included randomly selected sixty women, consisting of thirty women involved in the hospitality industry and thirty women from the non-hospitality industries. Results were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The results show that the linguistic and problem-solving skills have the most noteworthy impact on determining women's participation in the hospitality industry while childcare concerns and lack of awareness too had played a decisive role.

Keywords: Tourism industry, women's participation, hospitality industry

An assessment of local government law in promoting tourism

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Abstract

Tourism is one of the main foreign exchange earners for Sri Lanka. The two main mechanisms regulating tourism industry related businesses in Sri Lanka are the central government and provincial councils together with local government bodies. They, within their own legal boundaries, legislate, implement, evaluate and regulate the tourism industry involved by both private and public sectors. The aim of this research is to find out the scope available to local government bodies for the purpose of developing the tourism industry. The local governments are expected to implement and work as per the provisions of three main legislations that have been amended from time to time. Local government bodies operated under a mayor or chairman provide the tourism industry with vital services including public health and sanitation, roads and storm water drainage management, public utilities, welfare services, solid waste management and regulatory services. Commensurate with the services that they provide, the local government institutions do not receive a sufficient income, it has been stated often. It is also stated the local government bodies could boost their income if tourism-related projects could be included among their income generation plans currently being implemented. The value chain associated with the tourism industry extends through the resources of rural people, therefore, local governments have a highest potential to strengthen the local economy by creating new tourism products and adding them to the value chain to increase its quality. As per the objective of exploring the mandates of the local government bodies to ascertain means that could be utilized for the promotion of tourism industry, chairmen of the local governments in Anuradhapura District were interviewed to collect data. The role of local government bodies to provide services in the tourism sector according to the powers assigned by the local government law, as well as the preparation of new by-laws were examined. The assessment indicated that available legal provisions for environmental management and conservation by the local government bodies, legislative capacity of such bodies in environment management and conservation, environment protection licenses, equipment

maintenance, regulatory activities, business name registration, waste management could enable promotion of tourism and tourist in a more formal manner maximizing income potential for the country while upgrading the service quality and customer satisfaction of tourists.

Keywords: Local government, tourist destination, value chain, local economy, tourism products

Tourism, risk and recovery: Efficacy of policy-makers

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Abstract

The end of the century has brought many unseen risks which included terrorism, political violence, natural disasters as well as new global pandemic like the COVID-19, which placed the industry in jeopardy. This couldn't be truer than in the tourism sector, which, while being one of the fastest growing sectors of the economy in recent decades, it is also likely to be one of the hardest hit sectors during a crisis. Academia devoted considerable efforts to understand how to deal with these risks. Therefore, the objective of this study was to analysis a suitable framework for recovery and resiliency in tourism industry. The success factors that were identified for the tourism sector to maximize the speed of recovery. What is more important, the future of tourism depends on the efficacy of policy-makers to cope with these emerging threats. The present proceeding discusses the power of resiliency as a key force as well as its limitations towards a new tourism management in the twentieth one century. The study offers more alternative framework to understand the complex intersection between resiliency and the industry. finding revealed that the success factors identified for the tourism sector to maximize the speed of recovery, resilience of the tourism sector and measures addressing; strong commitment of decision-makers to the tourism industry, close industry network and collaboration between the public and private sectors, community support, business and communication efforts to attract tourists, build human resource capacity and social awareness across the sector, infrastructure development and new investments in tourism sector.

Keywords: Risks, dangers, tourism, system, resiliency