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Biodiversity and Sustainable Tourism
Case Studies and Best Practices



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Case Studies and Best Practices on Biodiversity and Sustainable Tourism

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A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY ON PROMOTING HOT WATER WELLS INTO HOT WATER POOLS

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Keywords: Tourism, Sri Lanka, hot water wells, hot water springs

1. Overview:

Sri Lanka, which has been mesmerising its visitors since time immemorial with geographic location, gold- sandy beaches, pleasant climate, rich cultural legacy, wildlife and flora to become a world-renowned tourist destination, is now appears perfectly poised to promote the hot water wells located in several places around the country by upgrading them to the level of hot water pools to attract both local and foreign tourists. Most of Sri Lanka's hot springs are found in the country's east. In general, volcanic topography is frequently linked to hot water springs throughout the world. Sri Lanka is situated in a region devoid of volcanic activity, hot springs there have nothing to do with eruptions, say Premasiri et al (2006), adding that, there are nine hot water springs found in the country so far whereas approximately 60 hot springs have been found in the Malay Peninsula, with 75 per cent of them being in places that are easily reached. Majority of the hot springs are utilized for bathing and leisure activities. While those in rural locations might only have a wooden bathroom, some hot springs close to metropolitan centres have been meticulously developed and upgraded into hotels, hot spas, and swimming pools. Those in difficult-to-reach places are frequently left undeveloped (Sum et al., 2011).

Hot water pools are quite well-known both among locals and foreign tourists in Malaysia. The hot springs' surface temperatures are less than 100 degrees C. Except for the hot spring in Tambun (Perak), which has a flow rate of roughly 20 liters/second, most hot springs had flow rates between two and six liters/second. The majority of the hot springs are found at low elevations between three and 200 meters above the sea level in a range of geographical settings, such as along stream beds or appearing in places like along bedrock fractures or marshy areas. Many of these hot springs, especially those that are nearby urban areas and are easily accessible, are transformed into vacation destinations with lodging, hot spas, and swimming pools (Fifty et al., 2021).

Some locals believe that these natural hot springs have healing properties and can treat skin conditions like rashes, acne, and fungal infections. Although that belief is still under scientific study, tourists and people looking for healing flock around these hot water springs. Some of Malaysia's natural hot springs have been upgraded to become contemporary tourist attractions with shops, rest homes, restaurants, and changing rooms built nearby.

Vast differences are discernible with Sri Lankan hot water wells are compared with the hot water springs in Malaysia. The Lankan hot water spring destinations are at primary level

and serve mostly as exhibiting spots. People visit there merely realize the existence of the hot springs. On the other hand, Malaysian experience with hot water destinations offers a vast array of excitements to the visitors who could enjoy and gain benefit from the nature's blessings. Such offers have been made feasible by converting the hot water springs into attractive spas and pools going beyond that primary level. Accordingly, this case study discusses the market potentials in upgrading hot water springs into pools with their own strengths and uniqueness by promoting the local content either based on natural resources or man-made physical attractions.

2. Background of the case study

The Blue Lagoon Geothermal Springs and Strokkur Geyser in Iceland, Pamukkale Travertine Thermal Pools in Turkey, Rotorua Hot Springs in New Zealand, and Beppu Springs in Japan are some of the well-known geothermal springs. Natural geothermal springs are distributed throughout the world, and the majority of them are associated with volcanism or active tectonic settings, such as recent uplifts (McCall, 2013). None of the hot springs in Sri Lanka is connected to either dormant or current volcanic activity. These hot springs are found in high-grade metamorphic rocks that are split into three main lithological complexes, namely the Highland Complex, Vijayan Complex, and Wannai Complex, in the Proterozoic crust (Rupasinghe et al., 2022).

The scorching temperatures need to be controlled if the hot springs are to be used for recreational activities. A 40° C maximum temperature has been established by the WHO for recreational use. Rapid algal growth in hot springs should also be taken into account. However, having a good hydraulic design and applying disinfectant can readily control algal growth. Hot springs that are close to or easily accessible from cities should be extensively developed for recreational uses. Hot springs with modest flow rates need to be looked at to see if there are any more spring outlets (Sum et al., 2010). Premasiri et al. (2006) mention about nine hot water springs in Sri Lanka. Following table shows the location and outflow temperature of the hot water springs.

Table 1: Hot water Springs in Sri Lanka

Hot Water Springs: Location	Temperature (°C Outflow)
Mahapelassa	44.9
Kanniyai	42.0
Rathkihiriya	42.0
Kapurella	55.0
Mahaoya	54.2
Planoya (Jayanthiwewa)	34.1
Wahawa(Padiyatalawa)	46.8
Nelumwewa	45.0
Adampane and Weherapokuna	Not yet measured

Source: Premasiri et al., 2006

The attached map, entitled Figure1, shows the location of hot water springs.

The present case study was carried out utilizing a hybrid methodology. A literary review was conducted to understand the current situation of spring tourism and how water springs are used as a resource for various forms of tourist. Participant observation was used as a primary data collection tool. Discussions were held with secondary sources having personal experience at three hot water wells in Sri Lanka and four hot water pools in Malaysia to collect data for this case study which has two main objectives: to compare and examine hot springs as attractive locations and to suggest possible applications and alterations that could turn hot water springs into extremely interesting tourist attractions.

3. Evaluation of the Case

There are numerous instances for constructing popular tourist destinations and resorts around geothermal and natural mineral water because of the long-standing associations between these resources and good mental and physical health the people could avail of themselves either by bathing in them or by consuming them – apart from drinking these waters are also used for making of traditional concoctions. These groundwater resources provide therapeutic benefits that have already been acknowledged (Fifty et al 2021).

The water springs are regarded as a resource for religious, cultural, and environmental tourism due to their nature, location, and numerous qualities. Natural spa springs all around the world are used for wellness or leisure purposes (Valeriani et al 2018). The medical hydrology, which is the scientific use of mineral springs and hydrotherapy for healing, in 1986 recognized hot springs as an alternative method of achieving good bodily and mental health (Jose et al 2015). Effects of thermal bathes in hot water springs have been documented as means to trigger the biological metabolism, alleviate some skin conditions (especially if they contain sulphur), psoriasis, dermatitis, and fungal disorders (Janis and Mahender, 2021). The following hot water wells were studied for the purpose of this study:

1. Mahaoya hot water wells

The figure 02 pictures show the Mahaoya hot water springs are made as wells which would not allow the visitors to have a pool experience. There are buckets available those who wish to have a bath; however, it is a rare opportunity.

2. Kanniya hot water wells

The Kanniya hot water springs is an evidence for presence of hot water wells in Sri Lanka without being promoted above their primary level (Figure 03).

3. Nelumwewa hot water wells

The latest discovered hot water springs in Sri Lanka are located in the Mahaweli B Zone's Nelum Wewa and Gal Wewa reservoir at the base of the Dimbulagala mountain range. Although these wells had been known to the villagers for as long time it is only after 2009, the place became popular among tourists (Figure 04). According to amazing lanka.com the spring's water temperature is 61° C, making it the country's hottest spring. The fact that this

spring is located inside a wewa (reservoir) and is submerged during the October rains makes it special as well.

Figure: 5 contains a collection of hot water springs in Malaysia giving visitors an amazing experience of enjoying thermal bath. The pictures show different locations with differently designed for bating and recreation activities.

4. Proposed Solution/Changes

There are various kinds of water springs depending on the location as well as geographical characteristics. Water springs have long histories of been traditionally used for religious, spiritual, and then medical and health purposes. Many nations advertise springs as a religious or sacred location, a religious destination, and venue for wellness and health tourism. In recent times the numbers of non-religious visitors have increased as they enjoy nature, the health benefits of minerals, natural settings, and river movement.

Sri Lankan tourism authorities can gain enormously positive outcomes by marketing spring water resources with their natural surroundings and geographical qualities. For this purpose, it is crucial to make sure that spring resources are managed and developed in a sustainable way to reduce any negative effects and enhance any beneficial ones. Future research should concentrate on hitherto unstudied areas such as hot springs effects on the neighbourhood and their sustainable management. To market these locations for the global market, a study on the driving forces behind foreign tourists should be conducted.

5. Recommendations

It is recommended to pay special attention to the supporting and complementary attractions when designing spring wells into pools. Complementary sights relate to a place's natural or cultural elements. They do not, however, hold the same level of significance or strength as flagship sights. Complementary views increase a location's appeal, resulting in an extra extraordinary opulence and assortment of ecotourism activities. While supporting attractions are artificial components that can be required for providing tourists with a boost and the services and goods they want or need.

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Pictogram



Figure 01

Map of hot water springs in Sri Lanka Source: <https://amazinglanka.com/wp/hot-springs-of-sri-lanka/>



Figure 02: Mahaoya hot water wells Source: Personal photo collections



Figure 03: Kanniya hot water wells



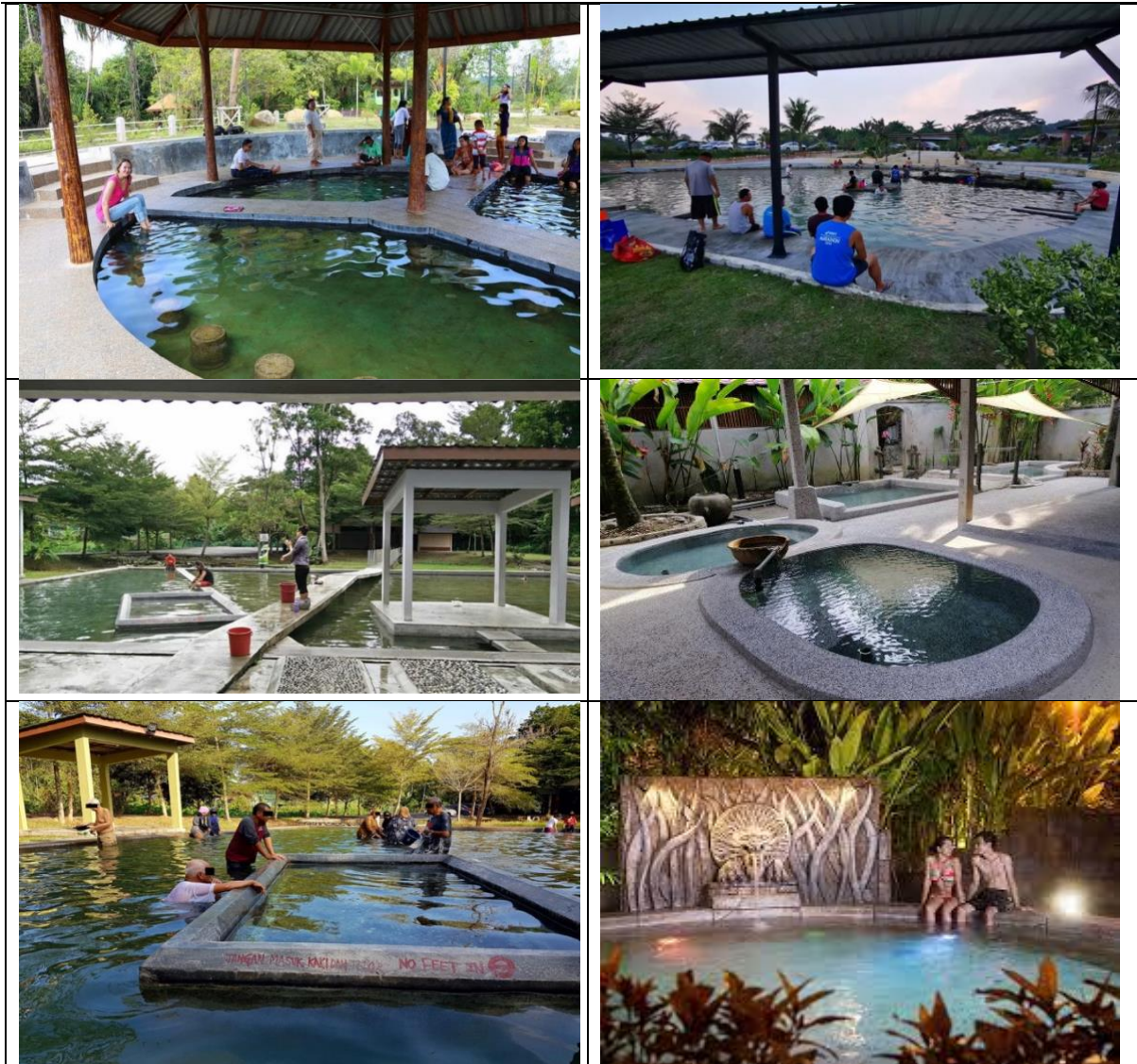
Figure 04: Nelumwewa hot water wells

Figure: 05 Hot water springs in Malaysia

Hulu Tamu hot spring pools in Malaysia

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A CASE STUDY OF IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL OF PROMOTING AMPARA DISTRICT AS A SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DESTINATION IN SRI LANKA

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Keywords: Sustainable tourism, promotion, Ampara,

1. Overview

Ampara is located in the Southeast Coast of Sri Lanka and belongs to the Eastern province. A total population which exceeds 648057, is scattered across 20 Divisional Secretariat Zones. Ampara population comprises of diverse cultures and ethnicities. According to 2012 Census statistics, there are 48% Sinhalese, 38% Muslims, and 17% Tamils resided in Ampara. Demographically, the male population has surpassed females by 10%. Ampara is famous for Dry Zone Agriculture and specialized in paddy, sugar, coconut, fisheries, and livestock products. During 437 BC, Ampara was an ancient civilization named ‘Digamadulla’, which belonged to the Anuradhapura kingdom. However, after being neglected during the Kandy and British rule, Ampara resuscitated by the 1949 Galoya Development Project (Ampara District Secretariat, 2022).

As a renowned tourist destination, Ampara is the home for fascinating attractions such as; Arugambay, Pottuvil Lagoon, Deegavapiya Stupa, Senanayake Samudra, Muhudu Maha Viharaya, Kalmunai Beach Mosque, Rathugala Vedda Village, Lahugala, Kumana, and Madura Oya National Parks. The present industrial situation of Ampara tourism is illustrated in figure1.

Figure1: Map of Ampara District



Source: <http://www.irrigationep.weebly.com/ampara>

Table 1: Ampara Tourism Statistics 2015 (UNDP, 2018)

Tourist arrivals	25,000
Tourism sector employees	400
Tourism revenue (Rs.Mn)	100
Tourism business establishments	95

Source: SLTDA Annual Report (2018)

This case study will address the prevailing constrains of Ampara to become a sustainable tourist destination and suggest strategic recommendations to overcome them. Ultimately, the case study solutions will act as a roadmap for Ampara, to become the first ever fully-fledged Sustainable Tourism District in Sri Lanka.

2. Background of the Case

A Sustainable Tourist Destination encourage both locals and visitors to consume the Economic, Socio-cultural, and Natural resources at the present state, while preserving them for future generations. According to Zhang (n.d), 53% of global travelers prefer to choose sustainable destinations and willing to pay 13% more on sustainable products, rather than normal travelers. According to *figure1*, Ampara depicts a slower development pace in comparison to other Sri Lankan tourism hotspots. Institutions such as; Ampara Divisional Secretariat, European Union, and United Nations have previously collaborated on preparing tourism development plans, by extensively monitoring the prevailing issues. However, the poor execution of plans have lead Ampara Tourism to not attain the desired growth targets. Furthermore, the current plans have only prioritized attaining Economic benefits such as; increasing tourist arrivals and revenues. Therefore, these development plans could be considered as ‘Unsustainable’, due to the fact of neglecting the Environmental and Socio-cultural components.

In order to become Sustainable, a tourist destination should encompass with the requirements of Economic Stability, Environmental Purity, and Social Equity. The current economic recession in Sri Lanka has resulted unemployment, poverty, skilled labor shortages, struggling tourism entrepreneurs, and poor infrastructure availability. The Environmental Purity has threatened by the degradation of natural resources, pollution, and unauthorized constructions on sensitive locations. The Social Equity in Ampara tourist destination has deteriorated from poor community support on tourism, security risks derived from disciplinary issues, lack of destination awareness, and slow-paced digitalization.

However, Ampara has already owned numerous potential resources to become a sustainable destination. If tourism stakeholders are granted with more opportunities to optimally utilize these valuable existing resources, the future of sustainable Ampara will definitely become brighter.

3. Evaluation of the case.

Throughout the course of transforming Ampara into a Sustainable Tourism District, the identified challenges will be separately elaborated under the three key pillars of Sustainability, with the aid of the latest performance figures obtained by UNDP (2018).

3.1 Environmental challenges

Ampara is blessed with rich biodiversity and geographical wonders. With the commencement of the Galoya Project, depletion of natural resources and the forest cover accelerated. However, the government authorities have not published official data related to the incidences of nature destructions in Ampara. Coral reefs and mangroves destruction have evolved when locals retrieved them in a mass-scale to obtain production inputs for cottage industries. 133,754 hectares of forest cover is further minimizing due to the developments, cultivations, and timber industry. This has led to rising temperatures during summer, drought, drying up of water resources, loss of soil fertility, and wildlife which threatening villages by losing their habitats. E.g. Human-Elephant conflict. Less than 30% tourist sites are having a proper wastage management system. This absence has resulted pollution, especially in coastal areas such as Pottuvil and kalmunai.

3.2 Economic challenges

Ampara depicts a poverty level of 5.4% and 55% of youth unemployment. Due to fewer opportunities, the labor migration to other districts are rising. The local overdependency on agriculture has created seasonal unemployment risks and lower participation in tourism activities. These situations are directly accountable for the shortage of skilled tourism labor in Ampara. There is an absence of institutions for tourism education and vocational training in Ampara. There are less than 500 tourism entrepreneurs operating and majority of them are suffering from the economic recession. Poor investments and institutional support accounts toward tourism infrastructure development and maintenance hindrances within accessibility, telecommunication, utility services, and unregistered establishments.

3.3 Socio-cultural challenges

There's a minor community support and involvement in Ampara Tourism. Only 70% households are aware of the potential benefits of tourism. Rigid social standards have minimized the community acceptance of tourism. There's a clear weakness in Ampara destination promotions. Not even 50% tourists were aware of Ampara and that hindered the destination competitiveness. Further absences are visible in the applications of E-marketing, product diversification, and market intelligence. Ampara is not a friendly destination for differently-abled tourists. Ampara reflects a poor technology adaptation rate, which constrain innovation opportunities. There were repeated incidents of security risks occurred in tourist sites, due to disciplinary problems of locals and tourists.

4. Proposed Solutions

Pragmatic and industry focused solutions are proposed for the challenges encountering throughout the Sustainable Destination Transformation of Ampara as following.

4.1 Solutions for Environmental challenges

A practical environment conservation framework should be introduced and smoothly executed, with the coordination of public, private, and community stakeholders. Jaynes (n.d) stated that, artificial mangroves and coral reef restoration conducted in North America was successful and cost-effective. Reforestation is a fruitful method to combat the diminishing forest cover. As a highly timber consuming nation, Japan plants new trees for each cut down tree. All parties should collaborate in protecting the natural reserves, for the well-being of wildlife species. For instance, dry zone farmers grew citrus plants around cultivations to prevent elephants accessing, instead of using deathly traps. Ampara can obtain the advantage of receiving sunlight throughout the year and the neighboring coastline, to invest in renewable energy sources of wind and solar power. This will enable Ampara to become a carbon-neutral district. Establishment of recycling facilities will assist on effectively managing wastage. Application of eco-friendly architecture and designing standards on constructions will cause a minimal environmental impact. E.g. installing an eco-friendly bird and bathing elephant observation deck beside the Senanayake Samudra.

4.2 Solutions for Economical challenges

The skilled labor shortage could be overcome by establishing facilities for tourism education and training within Ampara. For instance, tourism study programs could be introduced in the Eastern University and Hardy Vocational Training Center, in collaboration with SLITM. Overdependency on agriculture could be minimized by promoting Agro-tourism. E.g. Arrange tours to demonstrate the sugar production process from sugarcane fields to the Hingurana Sugar Factory. Government and private sectors could collaborate on providing assistance and motivation for tourism entrepreneurs. Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority's Investor Relations Unit can play a pivotal role on attracting investments to develop tourist infrastructure in Ampara. Tourist establishment registration process should be further simplified to avoid malpractices in violating quality standards.

4.3 Solutions for Socio-cultural challenges

Communities should be educated on potential returns of tourism activities and involve them in participative decision-making to streamline community acceptance of tourism. Adequate infrastructure should be established, to cater differently-abled visitors. E.g. Installation of wheelchair access bathing areas at the beaches. To protect safety at tourist sites, tourist police representatives and surveillance systems should be deployed to regulate visitor behaviors. Promotion of Community-Based Tourism in the villages of Uhana, Rathugala, Maruthamunai etc. will certainly offer unique tourist experiences and impact rural development. As an

initiative under tourism digitalization, online portals could be launched on E-ticketing and E-payments. Adaptation of digital marketing is the best technique to leverage the destination promotion of Ampara.

5. Recommendations

A clear strategic pathway is essential to modify Ampara, as a sustainable tourism hub. Overall strategic recommendations to align with the sustainable transformation process, are suggested as following. Governing bodies could adopt a Knowledge Management System to ensure a results-driven tourism development process and a Continuous Improvement Mechanism is mandatory for long-lasting success. Innovation Governance is another advantageous methodology to apply across all tourism businesses to address newly emerging industrial trends in a modernized and creative manner. Effective Public-Private Partnerships should be present as a collective effort throughout all stages of tourism development. In conclusion, Ampara already possess the strengths of numerous potential opportunities and by following a sophisticated development approach as suggested in this case study, Ampara could definitely rebrand as a sustainable tourist hotspot in the near future.

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CONSERVATION THROUGH BENEFIT SHARING: A CASE STUDY IN THE WEWALKELE ENVIRONMENTAL SENSITIVE AREA IN KALA OYA BASIN, WANATHAVILLUWA, PUTTALAM

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Keywords: Conservation, tourism, Kala Oya, environmental sensitive areas, Sri Lanka

1. Overview

Wewalkele, which comes under three Grama Niladhari Divisions namely the Aluth Eluwankulama, Parana Eluwankulama, and Raalmaduwa, is located in the Wanathavilluwa Divisional Secretariat Division (WDS), Puttalam District of the North-Western Province of Sri Lanka. Various types of land uses including, home gardening, paddy lands, marshes, forests, and water bodies have been observed in and adjacent areas. Land-extent wise, forest land is the most prominent, followed by agricultural land (paddy lands and home gardens). The Wewalkele is rich with various bio-resources such as food, wood products, medicines, and biomedical materials, ornamental species while providing a wide array of ecosystem services such as carbon sequestration and ameliorating climate.

The area is rich in biodiversity and it is home for several endangered species such as *Panthera pardus kotiya* (Sri Lankan leopard), *Elephas maximus* (Asian elephant), *Cyperus compactus* (compact sedge), and vulnerable species such as *Lutra lutra* (Eurasian otter), *Hydrophylax gracilis* (Sri Lanka wood frog) and *Manilkara hexandra* (palu tree). The dense cover of *Calamus*, floral species such as mangrove associates, and the forest area that is encroached into, provide refuge for several cryptic faunal groups such as mammals and reptiles while sustaining high species richness overall in many flora and fauna groups. Therefore, the importance of conserving Wewalkele is undoubtedly important owing to its biodiversity and ecosystem richness.

2. Background of the case study

Synonymous with the name denoting the area, Wewalkele is primarily a marsh ecosystem dominated by *Calamus rotang* (rattan/cane). The locals would enter into the area to obtain cane to make products such as rattan baskets - an average of 12 kilos of cane would be collected as raw material by each person daily. As opposed to other cane/rattan products, these products use a lot of cane as raw material, with relatively low economical returns. Usual practice is that setting the area on fire after harvesting *Calamus rotang* vegetation. Community households

still depend on biomass resources on lands accessible to them for much of their fuel and fodder, and for some of their food and income (Jodha, 1990). The locals residing in the buffer zone lands adjoining the forest would extend their land plot discreetly by shifting their boundary fences encroach the forest area time to time and cultivating coconut there. This type of encroachment of the reserve has been widely observed in the Wewalkele's southern part where there is a prominent coconut plantation. Forest clearance has also been noticed in several patches of the region to make way for the Chena cultivation.

Land encroachment is a persistent problematic issue in the area, as evinced by the fact that each time when the Wewalkele area is measured, the figures indicate an area smaller than the previous survey. The latest statistics show that the Wewalkele has an extent of 80 acres. The land encroachment for plantation and agriculture (as a result of unsustainable cane utilization) has been identified as the biggest threat to the survival of the threatened species and other flora and fauna species in the Wewalkele.

3. Evaluation of the Case

People living in the adjacent and surrounding areas of the Wewalkele use the forest's natural resources in an unsustainable way and this trend would not last long as excessive exploitation of the resources would soon end in difficulty to find these resources. This issue copped up from and prevailing in the grassroots with high contribution from stakeholders from that particular level demands solutions from the same level for any such solution to be effective. Integrated land-use planning with local participation that maximizing benefits for the environment and the public, may ensure long-term conservation of biodiversity. In that context, utilizing the co-management approach and adopting participatory principles, a plan was adopted grouping together the efforts by the WSD and the community to conserve the Wewalkele area. Implementation of the plan commenced with consultation sessions with locals and those sessions helped them recognize potential benefits in conserving the biodiversity riches of the Wewalkele for the posterity in the meantime availing themselves of the pecuniary prospectus. The sessions also contributed to the establishment of a Local Management Committee formally in order to conserve the biodiversity of the area. The Wewalkele was declared an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) by the Divisional Management Committee which was co-chaired by the Divisional Secretary, in 2019. The land was surveyed by the WSD and the boundary around Wewalkele was marked using 136 concrete posts with the ESA name, as per the Part III of the Schedule of the Gazette Extra Ordinary No 772/22 of 24th June 1993 and subsequent amendments (EIA Regulations), under the provisions of the National Environment Act, to demarcate the ESA and prevent further encroachment into the land (Please see figure 1 below). This move was a successful deterrent for land encroachment and put an end to instances of intermittent fire around the buffer forest of the Wewalkele. Less disturbing of the ESA and thereby its preference by four wild elephants to make it their habitation area further discourages locals entering into the ESA.

4. Solution/Changes

Measures for the Wewalkele ESA conservation are to be implemented ensuring that it are preserved to ensure the sustenance of community and natural resources and other living organisms in the habitat. Forests nearly everywhere provide inputs into rural households' subsistence use, and into their agricultural systems; for many, they also provide a source of income. Access to forest or tree resources can also help rural households diversify their livelihood base and reduce their exposure to risk (Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (2001). *25 years of community Forestry*. Rome, Italy). Community socio-economic development and basic training on sustainable harvesting of cane were provided for those engaged in cane product manufacturing. Training included guided field visits to the ESA from the entry routes in the Kegalle District. The field visits also served as motivational sessions for locals to have first-hand experience of the nature-endowed riches they are blessed and also of economic prospects offered to them by diversifying the rattan/cane products they make. The locals were provided with necessary equipment and further training to enhance skills and knowledge. Workshops on product diversification were conducted to increase locals' awareness on prospects of manufacturing utensils such as flower baskets and dustbins which require a lower quantity of cane. Training sessions on manufacturing such items were conducted and market linkages for the same were facilitated, and cane nurseries equipped with replanting facilities were set up.

The Wewalkele ESA site became the venue for the setting up of the country's first Shilpa Sabha (Crafts Council) with the patronage of the State Ministry of Cane, Brass, Clay, Furniture, and Rural Industry Promotion. This newly set-up council is expected to engage and lead the community to a higher level, and enhance the sustainability plan of the Wewalkele ESA. With additional training by the Crafts Council, the members of the community-based organizations earn approximately 30,000 Sri Lankan rupees a month.

5. Recommendations

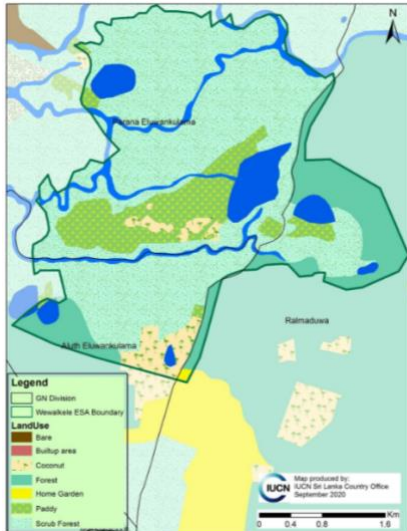
1. To continue training and development programmes for host communities regularly.
2. To evaluate and record the impact and the improvement and take necessary action to avoid negative impacts.
3. To introduce alternative home industry mechanisms to accommodate increasing population to reduce pressure on the preserving of the Wewalkele forest.
4. To introduce sustainable ecotourism activities to diversify revenue generation for communities.

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Pictogram

Figure 1: Map of Wewalkele ESA



(Source- Ministry of Environment, 2020)

Figure 2: Concrete posts around the boundary of the Wewalkele ESA, captured by one of the authors during field visit.



(Source: Authors)

A CASE STUDY ON COOPERATIVE APPROACH FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SEMBUWATTA LAKE

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Keywords: Regional development, cooperative society, rural economy, Sembuwatta, eco-tourism, sustainable tourism.

1. Overview

The success story of transforming an unprofitable/loss-gaining government-owned plantation company, to a profitable one, providing many benefits for the working staff through a cooperative society, using available resources to uplift the livelihoods of people in the community surrounding the Sembuwatta Tea Estate through eco based sustainable tourism development.

2. Background of the case study

The Elkaduwa estate located in the Matale district, Central province of Sri Lanka was established by the British (Scottish) in the late 1850s. In 1945, they constructed a small reservoir, presently called the Sembuwatta Lake (Dassanayaka, 2022) in the estate premises. The reservoir was constructed in low lands where formerly existed the estate's factory that destroyed in a fire. It is situated at an elevation of 1:140 m (thingstodosrilanka, 2022). The British put up a new factory close to their bungalow at a hilltop in the Elkaduwa Estate. With the construction of the factory, they converted their polo ground into a small reservoir for generating hydropower to operate the machinery at the tea factory. (Dissage, 2022). A few decades later, the ownership of the estate was shifted from the British to the Lankan Government and, due to subsequent mismanagement practices; the tea factory was closed down in 1987. At the same time, the reservoir was abandoned and the whole estate was left in an undesirable state.

As at end of 2003, the Elkaduwa Estate was at a loss of nearly 14 million rupees (Dissage, 2022). The situation was unchanged till 2014 and the income was not sufficient to pay even the wages of 313 members of the workforce. The estate was fully covered with weeds with no proper agricultural practices and the average plucking was limited to eight kilos of green leaves per worker (Dissage, 2022). Income was limited and the workers were discouraged due to the difficulties they faced in their daily life. They had no electricity, no proper sanitary facilities, housing, or healthcare, and their roads were underprivileged.

3. Evaluation of the case

Estate had only 18 per cent of high-yield V.P. tea and the rest was low-yield seedling tea, planted by the Scottish. Since 1987, no new planting of tea or proper maintenance practices were undertaken and the yield was poor (Dissage, 2022).

The tea harvest was only source of income of the estate. The workers' primary source of income was limited to their daily wages, which was not sufficient to maintain their day-to-day needs (Pallemulla, 2018). The estate was a loss-making entity, and the management had no means to develop the infrastructure or to facilitate workers resulting in their poor access to sanitary needs and health.

No electricity was provided for the line rooms housing the estate workers. Nearly 800 liters of kerosene oil were used monthly by all five divisions of Elkaduwa Estate (Dissage, 2022). As a result, accidents due to improper use of kerosene oil lamps were not rare. Due to their low income and low educational levels, the estate workers were addicted to liquor. Brewing and consuming illicit liquor was prevalent and that widespread social problem affected the workers' meagre income, health, and maintenance of peace and order in the area. Children's education was also affected by low household finance management, gender violence, and abuses followed by alcoholism (Pallemulla, 2018). Prices of consumer items at boutiques in the village were not fair. But due to the trap of debt, the estate workers had no option (Dissage, 2022).

The reservoir adjacent to the Campbell's Lane Forest has an enormous potential to attract tourist attraction as a destination delight if it is developed and promoted using sustainable tourism principles and there by contributing to livelihoods development as well as hydro-electricity generating system.

4. Solution

To overcome the challenges, the estate needed to be made profitable by restructuring main income source of the estate, the tea plantation, with proper agricultural practices. Sessions of motivation and education needed to be conducted among the members of the working staff to increase their awareness on personal financial management practices as well as among the youth on ill-consequences of consuming illicit liquor and related social problems. Additional sources of income for estate workers were to be identified and promoted. Infrastructure development in terms of roads, shelter, and access to health and sanitary facilities were needed in the meantime increasing the people's awareness on proper health practices. The underutilized nature and man-made assets were needed to be transformed to sources that uplift the quality of life of the people in the Elkaduwa Estate in line with the main objective of this case study project.

Following the change of the post of superintendent in the Elkaduwa Estate in 2005, discussions had been held with representatives of the labour unions for means to increase the volume of tea harvest and to set up Estate Workers Housing Cooperative Society (EWHCS).

The EWCHS succeeded in repairing the lake's power generators and providing intermittent electricity supply to 89 families of the Hapuwidde Division, which was later named as the Sembuwatta Division (Dissage, 2022). Production and consumption of illicit liquor were brought to a non-existing level with EWHCS cooperating with police and law enforcement authorities (Dassanayaka, 2022). Provision of electricity contributed towards bringing down the number of instances pertaining to kerosene-induced fire accidents (Dissage, 2022). It was made mandatory that all school-going age children should attend the Elkaduwa Tamil School and awareness on consequences of child abuse, educational benefits, alcohol prevention, gender violence, and cash hold management were increased among stakeholders. The Sembuwatta Lake was modernized raising its spill level increasing its water retention capacity by so that it could generate electricity to maintain round the clock supply to the community. In the meantime, it was promoted on the internet and the social media and opened for public as an attraction for both local and foreign tourists (Dassanayaka, 2022). The EWHCS introduced tickets for the visitors and initially 40 per cent of the income was given to the plantation company. The balance was utilized for social welfare activities and projects, such as free medicine for the estate workers, free meals for child development centres, and free school uniforms, bags, shoes, and books for students who entered grade 1 classes at the government school, and free barber saloon facilities. The EWHCS also introduced a low-interest loans for the workers to redeem their pawned jewellery, vegetable cultivation loans, and a bank named "wanisa" in the Estate, managing abandoned tea lands, cutting foliage project, etc. (Dissage, 2022). The EWHCS became instrumental in increasing the average plucking volume of green leaves of tea to 18 kilos per person. Planting of tea was resumed in the Elkaduwa Estate where no single plant had been planted for 20 years since 1987. The Elkaduwa Estate no longer a loss making white elephant maintained by the funds from the Government Treasury.

5. Recommendations

The Sembuwatta Lake should be promoted as a destination delight by promoting its nature-endowed riches of its misty and chilly atmosphere with pine trees and tea-covered slopes surrounding the lake with a natural spring water pool where visitors could relax in tranquility. It is suggested to support the development of the Lake to be an icon among travel destinations. The EWHCS must further continue its good work in motivating and increasing awareness among the workforce on the need of further developing the status quo to maximise their gains through maintaining the competitive edge of the plantation company and its products. The company must continue its efforts and experimenting with further diversification of their goods and services while focusing on improving the Sembuwatta Lake to the level of a leading tourist destination.

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Pictogram



Sembuwatta Lake in 2005.
 Photo credit: Radley Dissage



Sembuwatta lake aerial view in 2022: (Travelql, 2022)



The pool with natural spring water:
 Captured by the author1 in 2019



A notice at the ticket office of Sembuwatta
 Captured by the author1 in 2019

A CASE STUDY ON THE ISSUES FACED IN PROMOTING RITIGALA, SRI LANKA AS A NATURE TOURISM DESTINATION

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Keywords: Nature tourism, promotion, Ritigala, Sri Lanka

1. Overview

Sri Lanka as a developing country experiences some problems such as unemployment, issues in regional development, balance of payment and poverty etc. Tourism industry has prospectus for helping find solutions for aforementioned problems. Being an island endowed with riches of nature ideal for tourism Sri Lanka must increasingly consider non-traditional forms of tourism such as nature tourism. The Ritigala Natural Reserve in Central Sri Lanka, currently visited by only a small number of visitors, is an indication to the level of nature tourism being made use of in Sri Lankan national economy at the same time pointing to the prospectus full of gains promoting it as a nature tourism destination capitalizing on its unique ecological and archaeological importance and rich bio diversity. At present, domestic and international tourists visit the area and engage in activities such as trekking, hiking, bird watching, photography and elephant watching etc. Apart from that other closer by tourist destinations such as Sigiriya, which records the highest number of international and domestic tourists' arrivals, have come across issues pertaining to their carrying capacities calling for the development of similar destinations. In that context, Ritigala is an ideal place for promoting as a destination for nature tourism as that would result in development of tourism industry creating job opportunities and improvement of the infrastructure in the area.

2. Background of the case study

Ritigala is one of the best multi-attraction destinations in Sri Lanka but its reception of international and domestic tourists is not up to its potent. The numbers of arrivals to surrounded attractions such as Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Sigiriya and Dambulla have high percentage records, Ritigala is still lesser known and some prefer to skip the site due to some issues in and around the area. Therefore, this case study attempts to identify those issues, to design a promotional strategy and to identify means of ensuring the engagement of the community for that purpose.

The study is conducted by using the mixed method. Both qualitative and quantitative data have been analyzed on the basis of mixed methods. Data were also collected from a sample of 100 - 50 domestic and 50 international, tourists selected using random sampling techniques.

Percentage analysis has been carried out using Excel and SPSS. Primary data through questionnaires, interviews and field visits and the secondary data through reviewing literature in a range of sources including reports, books, internet, magazines and tourism annual reports etc.

Nature tourism is a term that can be applied to any form of tourism that relates to the natural environment and cultural heritage of an area or that undertakes good environmental management (or green) practices. There are three methods included by which a tourism practices required to demonstrate if they were to be considered a green operation. They are as follows:

- a. The wise use of resources such as raw materials, water and energy
- b. The prevention of pollution (air, land, and water)
- c. The protection and where possible the enhancement of biodiversity

In 2005, there were more than 800 million international tourist arrivals globally, an increase of 5.5 percent on 2004 (World Tourism Organization, 2006). It is estimated that the market for nature tourism is increasing at six times the rate of tourism overall (World Tourism Organization, 2006). Some of the factors that have contributed to this growth trend in nature tourism are that people are looking for new experiences, adding diversity to their experiences, combining business travel with holidays and looking to “get back to nature” (Maetzold, 2002). Nature tourism is a rapidly expanding activity throughout the world. The industry segment takes place in predominantly natural settings. Nature tourism can take many forms, ranging from the passive (enjoying a view, painting) to the active (white-water rafting, mountain biking) and from the consumptive (fishing, hunting) to the non-consumptive (walking, bird-watching). Ecotourism, a term that has been increasing in popularity in recent years, is one niche market within the larger nature tourism market (Halpenny and Otte, 1999). Nature tourism has the potential to provide many opportunities. Stueve et al (2002) estimate those natural areas, and their closely associated local cultures, and the various related tourist, recreational and leisure activities, contribute around half the total economic activity attributable to the travel and tourism sector. This equated approximately to US\$ 340 billion in 2005. Tourism is the principle ‘export’ (foreign exchange earner) for 83 percent of developing countries (Mastny, 2001). Nature-based tourism diffuses economic benefits to rural or peripheral regions because the main natural and heritage attractions are often away from urban or industrial areas (Newsome et al., 2002). Many private, public and community landholders are turning to nature tourism as a profitable adjunct or replacement for farming, forestry or fisheries.

Ritigala, which belongs to cultural triangular, is one of the ideal locations to explore natural and archaeological attractions in Sri Lanka. The mountain range rises around 2,000 feet from the surrounding terrain which is about 500 feet above sea level. Kodigala or the Flag Rock is the highest point (of Ritigala Peak) in this mountain range and is of 2,514 feet in height. One of the amazing factors of this mountain range is three types of forests and various types of climate structures within the same mountain range. The bottom part of the mountain range is Dry Mixed Evergreen Forest type, the middle part of the range is Tropical Montane Forest type and the highest terrain of Upper Montane Forest type.

(<https://www.srilankaview.com/ritigala.htm>) If someone want to explore the archaeological attractions at Ritigala, many monastic ruins of stones, terrace ways, circular terraces, a stone bridge, and remains of a giant stone banked pond built across a water stream can be identified during the visit to Ritigala.

3. Evaluation of the case

The following findings are given based on the case study field survey:

Satisfaction on attractions in Ritigala

According to the pie chart figure:1, 34 percent of tourists satisfy with the attractions which are available in the particular destination of Ritigala including nature, heritage, spiritual and adventure based.

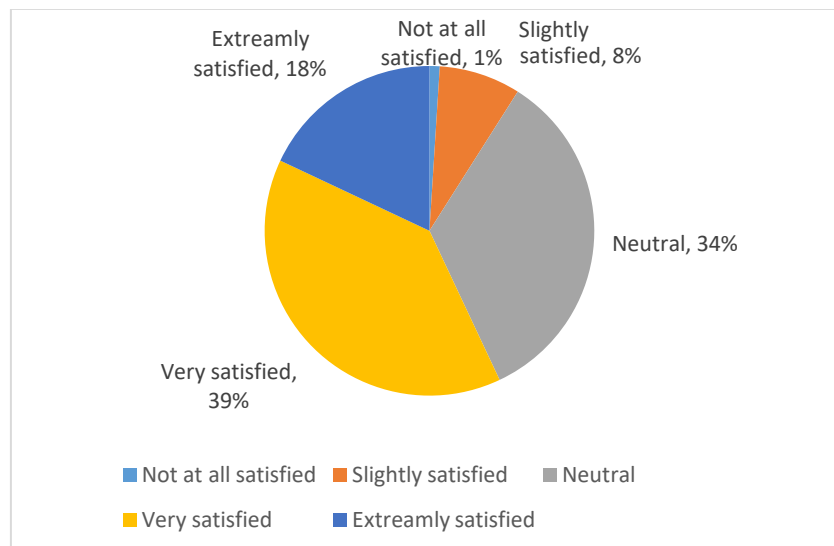


Figure 01: Satisfaction on attractions in Ritigala

Satisfaction on accommodation sector in Ritigala

With regard to the level of satisfaction on accommodation in Ritigala area, 42 percent of tourists not satisfy with the identified facilities and 38 percent of tourists slightly satisfy with the accommodation available in the surrounding.

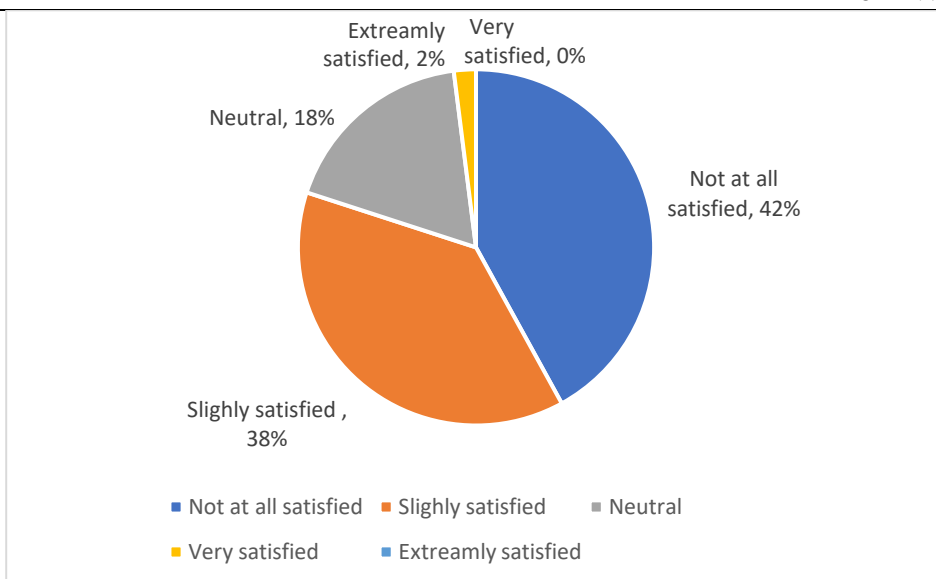


Figure 02: Satisfaction on accommodation sector in Ritigala

Satisfaction on the accessibility in Ritigala

As per the below chart altogether, 57 percent of tourists satisfy with the accessibility in Ritigala and 27 percent of tourists responded that the satisfaction level as in the way of neutral.

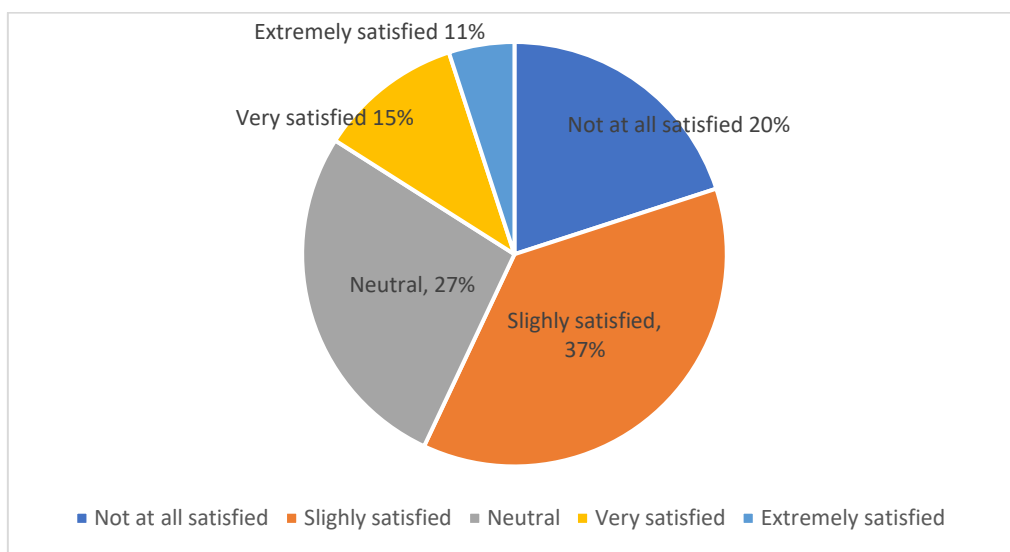


Figure 03: Satisfaction on the accessibility in Ritigala

Satisfaction on amenities in Ritigala

The chart shows that 87 percent of local and international tourists not always satisfy with the available amenities as there are not enough facilities even to fulfill the basic needs and wants of tourists who travel to destination of Ritigala.

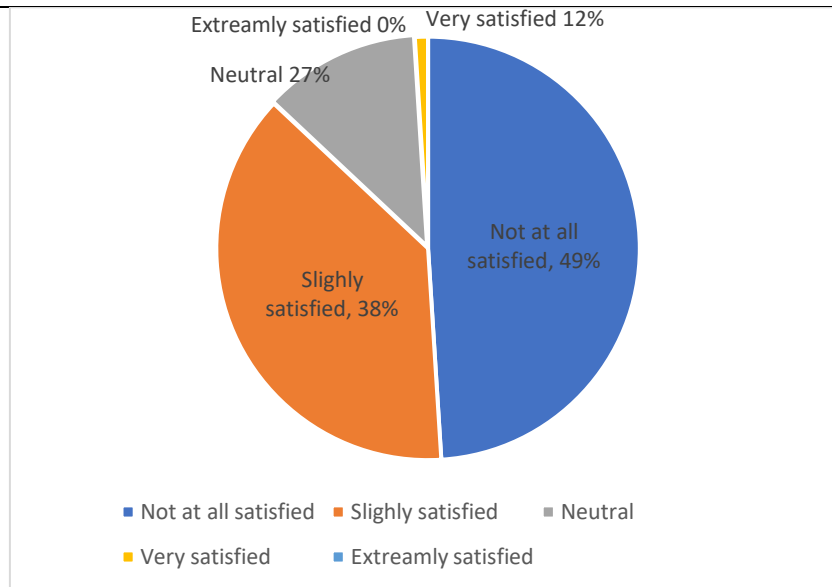


Figure 04: Satisfaction on amenities in Ritigala

Satisfaction on nature and heritage-based activities in Ritigala

As per the above chart, 47 percent of tourists prefer to the available activities which are majorly based on nature at the destination of Ritigala. Further, 31 percent of tourists not at all satisfy with the tourism-based activities offered by the identified destination.

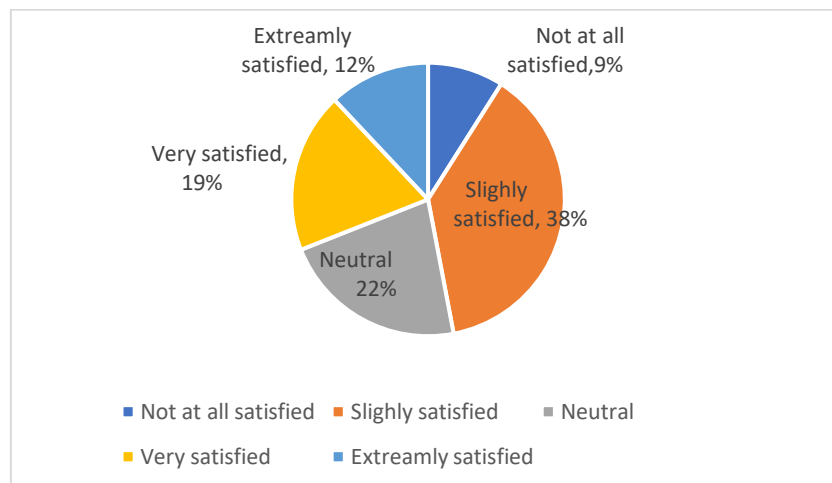


Figure 05: Satisfaction on nature and heritage-based activities in Ritigala

4. Proposed solution/changes

The Ritigala tourism destination needs to be well-organized targeting more nature, archaeological and adventure-based attractions in order to give a satisfied experience to tourists. Identifying potential attractions and lesser-known attractions, the experience of tourists should be diversified rather than offering them a traditional way of attractions. Further,

the museum also should be re-organized with adapting global trends related to modern museology.

Considering to accommodation sector in Ritigala area, both local and international tourists are not always satisfied and it also need to be paid attention on to attract more local and foreign investment to have a proper distribution of different types of accommodation in the particular area.

Further, accessibility is the other major component which is having considerable number of issues in the area. Here, public and private transportation should be well established to have an easy accessibility to the Ritigala area. Not only roads in the surrounding should be re-constructed in order to reach within few hours. Not only, amenities including shopping, electricity, communication and water etc. should be well established to make travel more comfortable rather than wasting time.

Activities are more significant during the travel to a destination as it is provided memorable experience to tourists. Therefore, designing diversified activities based on nature, adventure, heritage would be truly satisfied tourists who are seeking lifetime experience in their journey. For that, trekking, hiking, camping, photography locations, village tours, community-based tourism, heritage tourism and elephant watching etc. can be recommended in order to attract high-expenders.

5. Recommendations

The community involvement is recommended to be considered as one major significant factor in designing products related to the Ritigala area. The opinions and ideas from the stakeholders should be paid attention in making policies and sharing benefits from the tourism industry. For that, community can be involved introducing homestay concept, providing business opportunities such as shopping, souvenirs, retail, and supplying foods for hotels etc. Likewise, these identified factors should be applied in order to make a satisfied product to the destination of Ritigala.

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SUSTAINABLE CULINARY TOURISM PROMOTION: IN THE CASE OF ELLA SPICE LAND

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1. Overview

Culinary tourism is a component that can be attracted sustainable and culinary tourism simultaneously. It is one of the best ways to attract foreigners to sustainable tourism. Sustainable culinary tourism focuses on education and facilitating dialogue and the most important thing is it enables an opportunity to actively participate in cuisine-based rural activities with the local community. It is a way to experience the real life of Sri Lankan people with the purpose of traditional cuisine. These experiences also inspire sustainable practices beyond the immediate context and offer generally applicable tools for sustainable consumption that travelers can take back home with them.

This case study is focused on Ella Spice Land a sustainable eco-tourism Sri Lankan Traditional cookery class situated in the Ella city area. This is a mix of environment, culture, and education of Sri Lankan Traditional Cuisine in an Eco-friendly environment. This cookery class is providing traditional culinary activity for the foreign market. According to that, this case study intends to examine problems and potential in sustainable culinary tourism. The problem of this study can be identified as frequently facing problems in traditional culinary tourism in Sri Lanka. According to the problems identified and faced during the easter attack, covid 19, and the economic crisis in Sri Lanka this case study brings a strategical framework for sustainable culinary tourism development in Sri Lanka. The recommendations will be focused on sustainable practices for the development of this kind of tourism activity.

2. Background of the Case

Ella Spice Land is an eco-friendly cookery hut which is situated in Halpe village, five kilometers far away from the Ella city area. The cookery hut is surrounded by a green environment and a paddy field view. This activity is providing a culinary-based experience in Sri Lankan traditional cookery. In here only we are using traditional equipment and aim to give an authentic experience for the travelers. This activity is conducted as family-based activity including my family members, my partner who is having more than eight-year experience in the hotel industry, and myself having experience as an academic. The welcome drink is a herbal drink and tourists can experience the taste of organic foods and spices in Sri Lankan cuisine.

This activity was started in 2019 and during that time Easter Sunday attack severely affected Sri Lanka tourism. As a result of this, it was difficult to promote this new activity to foreigners. However, the first booking was for a honeymoon couple from the Netherlands, and they recommended our activities to their friends. Word-of-mouth promotion was affected to spread this newly started business.

During a few months, the activity was well recognized in the Ella city area because of the authentic experience they are having. During the time of promoting this activity COVID-19 pandemic was affected on a large scale. As a result of that again it was faced with considerable difficulties, especially in gaining revenues. This situation was affected for nearly two years and again the country borders were opened, and we were able to promote our welcome drink as an immunity-boosting drink. The spices also affecting to prevent this kind of disease and we were able to promote these things as an advantage after COVID-19 pandemic.

However, during the cookery sessions conducting we could get couples, and group bookings between 3-4 and 8-12. When it is conducting large-scale groups even though this activity is provided by two or three family members it faced difficulties in facilitating a good experience. During the time conducting the cookery, a survey was conducted to identify the problems they are having. Since we are providing eco-friendly activities, we are always trying to bring our atmosphere to zero plastic. Travelers are consuming mineral water in plastic bottles. They hesitate and fear consuming other water while they are traveling. But we are providing pure water taken from the well and serving it in the coconut shell. It is very difficult to use bottled water as the high cost while cooking and washing food materials during the activity. As I mentioned, this activity is conducted by my family and I'm out of the way according to the job I'm doing as a lecturer in tourism. As a result, we were unable to register the business after the difficulties faced during the Easter Sunday attack and COVID-19 pandemic.

3. Evaluation of the Case

When evaluating the above case study Ella Spice Land can be identified a few problems in different aspects. The cookery hut is situated far away from Ella city and most of the tourist-based activities and businesses. This started a critical situation as the Easter Sunday attack and difficult to promote again the effect of COVID-19. Revenue earned from this kind of activity during the difficulties is a considerable problem.

On the other hand, Europeans such as Australians, Canadians, Switzerland, and the Netherlands are the most engaging travelers to this activity and there is a rare interest in other countries for this kind of activity. Rarely we got travelers from Oman, China, and a few Asian countries and there is a possibility to promote these activities for them.

Water consumption during the activity is also a considerable problem for this kind of activity. Since it is followed by sustainable and eco-friendly practices always trying to keep zero plastic. Group booking handling is also somewhat difficult when it has a group of around eight to eleven pax. As an activity conducted by well-experienced and well-knowledgeable stakeholders in the industry, we are giving the best service to travelers. As a result of difficulties

raised in the country, we were unable to register our business yet. These are the considerable problems identified in this case study.

4. Proposed Solution and Changes

When considering the above problems, the solutions and changes can be identified below. As a business far away from Ella city we decided to name our business including the word “Ella” to find out activity easily for the foreigners. We are giving in detail an explanation about Sri Lankan traditional cuisine and motivating to get community-based experience as it is conducting the family-based activity. Highly promoted welcome drink and spices for immunity boosting and a healthy lifestyle. This activity has possible to promote Asian countries as well. It can develop similar activities for Asian travelers even if they believe in the same lifestyle in Sri Lanka as they are not motivated to get this kind of experience. As a result of the difficulty in conducting large groups, the activities and space should improve furthermore. When considering the problem of water consumption, it can be verifying the safety of consuming pure water taken from the well.

5. Recommendation

Developing a procedure to promote tourism businesses and activities far away from Ella city. It should encourage both travelers and service providers to sustainable tourism practices. Traditional equipment & methods tell the story of ancient Sri Lankan people, healthy food for a healthy life, local products & spices are the reflection of Sri Lanka and Sri Lankan Food flavors are the iconic symbol to identify internationally. These are the fact that can be promoted sustainable culinary tourism in Sri Lanka. Develop a strategy to start-up businesses during difficulties in the country. Introduce a strategic framework to the registration procedure for the industry experts as they are doing another profession in the industry except for the tourism business. Introduce health verification for travelers when consuming water in local activities and local places.

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Authors would like to thank the Ella Spice Land Team and customers

A CASE STUDY ON WINDSURFING AND KITE SURFING AT KALPITIYA, SRI LANKA: DEVELOPING A LEGAL FRAMEWORK

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Keywords: Wind surfing, kite surfing, Kalpitiya, legal framework

1. Overview

Kalpitiya has experienced organic growth in popularity for Kitesurfing since 2011. The absence of a proper legal framework to govern such watersports in the Kalpitiya area had led to environmental degradation, social conflict, and reduced satisfaction of tourists. Due to the operation of kitesurfing training schools without a formal governing mechanism, many social and environmental problems in Kalpitiya cropped up. The usage of lagoon areas for kitesurfing disturbed fishing activities that resulted in a conflict between the fishing community and the training schools arose. Furthermore, environmental degradation was also taking place through the preparation of temporary constructions in the absence of a formal plan and the use of the sensitive coastlines used to run the training schools. None of these training schools had sanitary facilities including toilet facilities and a formal program for solid waste disposal for the area was absent. To prevent this situation, there has been a need for a formal mechanism to regulate and supervise kitesurfing training schools for many years. Accordingly, under Section 126 (VI) of the Local Council Act No. 15 of 1987, the By-Law on the Management of Areas for the training purpose of windsurfing and Kitesurfing has been introduced through Gazette No. 2130 dated 28th June 2019. The provision of a legal framework and governing mechanism for kitesurfing has resulted in a reduction of social conflict between the kitesurfing training institutes and the fisher community.

The act of kite surfing uses the power of the wind to move across the water with the help of a large parachute-type kite being propelled by a rider on a small surfboard/kiteboard. According to adventure sports facilitator- Redbull, Kalpitiya was ranked the 4th best destination in the world to engage in kite surfing, in 2019. Currently, many adventure tourists and champions in the field such as Mikaili Sol are seen engaging and practicing the sport in Kalpitiya, due to the favourable conditions of the area, especially the consistent wind speed of 20-30 knots.

2. Background to the case

Kandakuliya Kuduwa Lagoon, Kappaladiya Lagoon, and Vellai Island Lagoon are mainly used for kite surfing in Kalpitiya Divisional Secretariat Division (DSD). Of these, the training

schools are operated only in the area around Kandakuliya and Kappaladiya Lagoon. Best season for kitesurfing in Kalpitiya area is April to October. However, in December and January some kitesurfers come to this area for training. The humble beginnings of Kitesurfing Kalpitiya DSD were first experienced in 2011, after which, a gradual increment in the popularity of the sport was observed. Those engaged in this sport can be segregated into two groups; trainee kite surfers and experienced kite surfers. Due to its increased popularity by 2016, several kite surfing training institutions had also bloomed.

3. Evaluation of the Case

However, before the emergence of kitesurfing in the area, the fisherfolk had occupied the same area for their livelihoods. The lagoon and ocean had been used by fishermen for many years prior. With the popularization of kitesurfing, competition for the same space commenced. The temporary sheds built to receive protection from the sun during kitesurfing training were in the way of the traditional act of pulling of fishing nets (*maa del*) by the fishermen, which led to building up of tension between fisherfolk and kitesurfing institutes. The fisherfolk accused the kitesurfing institutes for the reduction in their earnings caused due to the operation of kite surfing training over the same space in the lagoon and sea. The blooming of kitesurfing institutes had also taken place, where most were not even registered with the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA). With the absence of professional trainers, the quality of training provided and the safety aspect of the sport was compromised. The operation of kitesurfing training was dominated by a few individuals, who made it mandatory to go through a training institute to use the area for personal training. The Kalpitiya Pradeshiya Sabha's (PS) involvement in the matter was minimal as evident from the non-availability of any sanitary facilities in the area, which was approximately 3 or 4 km away from the nearest hotel. Further garbage disposal mechanisms were also non-existent. At times, the entire area of the lagoon was utilized for this sport, without any carrying capacity considerations. Also, since the lagoon was used for sports from morning until night, it was not possible to use a specific time for fishing activities.

4. Proposed Solution and Changes

The kitesurfing activities that had been taking place sans any regulatory framework in the Kalpitiya DSD were posing environmental and social threats to the locals and tourists alike. The efforts made by authorities in the year 2014 to mitigate the same were unfruitful. In the year 2016, following discussions with the Puttalam District Fisheries Committee, a committee was appointed to prepare a mechanism for the regulation of kitesurfing, for which Divisional Secretary Kalpitiya, Deputy Land Commissioner Puttalam, Assistant Director of Fisheries Department, Director Provincial Environment Authority, Deputy Director Central Environment Authority, Assistant Director Coastal Conservation and Coastal Resource Management Department, Assistant Director Land Use Planning Department Puttalam District, Secretary, Kalpitiya PS, Officer In Charge NARA Kalpitiya and Regional Officer of SLTDA were appointed. This newly appointed committee held discussions with those

engaging kitesurfing training schools and the fishing community of the area, followed by the preparation of a report that was to be implemented for the governing kitesurfing and forwarded same to the District Fisheries Committee.

5. Recommendation

A regulatory framework was desperately required to prevent any further damage and encroachment into the coastal sensitive area and to prevent the social tensions from escalating. A Bylaw was required to be passed for the management of areas for training purposes of kitesurfing, as it does not come under the mandate of the PS. Based on the prepared proposals, the Kalpitiya PS and the North Western Local Government Commissioner's Department prepared a new Bylaw for implementation in the Kalpitiya area. Accordingly, on 24th May 2019, the Bylaw was gazette to make provisions for the control and management of kitesurfing in the Kalpitiya PS. Through a participatory approach of fisher communities and kitesurfing institutes, government officers, and other stakeholders, various suggestions and decisions were arrived at, through a bottom-up decision-making process, for the actions that come under the mandate of the PS.

According to the by-laws, it has been possible to take the following necessary measures for several problems that existed until then.

- The approval of the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority must be obtained for all training schools.
- Issuance of permits for training schools considering the maximum carrying capacity of the lagoon.
- All constructions that are carried out are required to be in accordance with a plan of the Department of Coastal Conservation and Coastal Resource Management.
- Dealing with the health facilities of trainees.
- Restriction of training time from 9.00 am to 6.00 pm.
- Restriction of training activities in areas used for fishing activities.
- Provision of other facilities required for training schools by the Kalpitiya PS themselves.

Due to the above measures, it has become possible to get solutions for the problems that have existed so far. But since the Easter attack incident in 2019, the Covid-19 pandemic, and the collapse of the tourism industry in the Kalpitiya area, this Bylaw has not been implemented so far. But the Kalpitiya PS hopes to implement it from year 2023.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT ON WILDLIFE TOURISM IN THE YALA NATIONAL PARK WITH SPECIAL CONCERN TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

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Keywords: Socio-economic impacts, wildlife tourism, national parks, local community development and awareness

1. Overview

Yala National Park is the most visited and second largest national park in Sri Lanka, bordering the Indian Ocean. Located in the Southern and the Uva provinces of the country, it covers 979 square kilometers. It was declared a Wildlife Sanctuary in 1900. This park is very famous for its variety of wild animals. The government has played a significant role to conserve elephants, leopards and aquatic birds as well as protecting the biodiversity in the sanctuary and to maintain the well-being of the community of the area. The Yala National Park belongs to a dry and wet semi-climatic region and it receives rain from the northeast monsoon. There are 215 bird species including six endemic species living in the park. The park has 44 species of mammals. The highest density of leopards in the world could be found in this park. In tourism industry, the Yala National Park is an attraction that generates considerable income for the national economy. The statistics made available by the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA) show both international and domestic visitors frequent the national park annually.

2. Background of the case study

Tourism is one of the main resources that generate income for the country and for the benefit of the local community who lives around the Yala National Park. Both positive and negative impacts for the local community could be assumed when developing tourism there, and it has been often highlighted that there is a need for cooperation between public and private sectors and the surrounding community to devise methods and means to mitigate the negative impacts while widening the scope for positive impacts to improve the quality and the living standards of the community.

The Yala National Park is the most preferred national park among tourists as it could be seen from the SLTDA statistics. More than 68 percent of visitors to the National Park are local tourists. Of those who travel to Kataragama Temple, 99.9 percent travelers visit the Yala National Park.

A large variety of accommodation units have been established starting from homestays up to star-class hotels in and around the Yala National Park catering to the visitors from

different income segments. Direct and indirect employment opportunities have been created working in and around the park for the local community, e.g. the Yala safari jeep drivers and tourist guides. The reputation of wildlife tourism in Sri Lanka has gained positive world recognition thanks to unforgettable experiences and pleasant memories shared by the international tourists who had visited the Park.

Various negative impacts have been identified. Negative sociocultural and environmental impacts have occurred inside the Yala National Park due to the unethical behaviours of the visitors. The different cultures of outsiders might disturb the local culture and cause social discomfort.

3. Evaluation of the case

The purpose of this study is to identify the sociocultural and environmental impacts of tourism on the local community in the Yala National Park, to make suggestions to minimize them and to develop strategies to maintain sustainability at the wildlife park. According to the secondary data available on the websites, the community is actively involved with tourism-related activities. Most people have a positive perception regarding tourism development in the area. People are getting direct and indirect advantages through the developments i. e. roads, water supply, electricity, wastewater, and solid disposal systems. The quality of life in the community has been enhanced. Women's contribution to the development of tourism has increased. Small and Medium-sized Enterprise sector developments have rapidly increased and traditional handicrafts, souvenirs, and handmade ornaments businesses are generating considerable income for the community. Some former studies have noted that there is no increase in education, health conditions, and safety and security of the community and cultural values have not been changed. Data were collected from 20 park guides, jeep drivers, and the park warden through responses to a questionnaire, and their observations are taken into consideration as primary data to assess the impacts. A number of derogatory behaviors of local tourists have been detected and categorized according to their nature, such as i. Over-visitation. ii. Disturbance to the wildlife. iii. Exceeding the time limits of visitation. iv. Pollution inside the park. v. Violation of park rules by vehicles VI. A dilemma occurred with camping. vii. Animal deaths resulting from vehicle accidents (Rubasinghe, 2013).

4. Proposed solution/changes

To conduct awareness programmes by the government departments to educate the local community about positive and negative impacts in sociocultural aspects

To educate the local community on how to participate in the park supply chain and tourism to earn extra income

To consider the social factors such as perceptions, culture and attitudes, traditions and customs values in promoting tourism. When the tourism industry is stable, traffic distribution methods are to be introduced to minimize the damage by the over-carrying capacity to the park.

Peripheral attractions must be identified and with necessary infrastructure development, and safety and security measures, methodically develop, manage and market to divide the traffic especially during peak seasons.

Overcrowding with poor infrastructure facilities would change the lifestyle of the local community by altering the hygienic and sanitation status and pollution of natural resources. Pollution may increase and disturb the ecological balance of the area.

When more jeeps enter the Wildlife Park it will lead to soil erosion and pollution of the natural environment and the natural habitats might be damaged.

At the same time, social factors such as attitudes, perceptions, culture, and social impacts of tourists need to consider protecting the environment and all species living

5. Recommendations

In implementing projects on conservation of natural resources (environmental sustainability), local economic development (socio-economic sustainability) must be considered for the development of local residents.

Local development initiatives must be implemented and educated to protect the sustainability of the resources and the community values.

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A CASE STUDY ON SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY TOURISM PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT IN TRINCOMALEE, SRI LANKA

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Keywords: Community based tourism, sustainable product development, sustainable tourism, environmental conservation

1. Overview

The development of tourism in rural destinations contributes to the three pillars of sustainability economic, social, and environmental in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Sustainable development goes hand in hand with the rising notion of sustainable tourism. Community tourism is one of the ways to develop sustainable tourism for a destination in the direction of poverty alleviation and fair share within the host community. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in rising interest from tourists looking for new experiences based around natural and rural areas, far from congested settings. This, combined with the already rising demand for more authentic experiences that offer stronger engagement with local communities, their culture, and products, as well as the demand for a greener approach in all stages of the travel experience opens immense opportunities for the economic, social and environmental revitalization of rural areas through tourism.

A community is defined as a group of individuals that share some common characteristics. A group of residents is a community if they share physical proximity or geography with delineated boundaries. Within the current global discourse on community development, communities are mainly defined by geography and level of economic development, providing there is a sense of belonging and identity with shared ties, values, and beliefs, and face similar/related issues (UNWTO, 2020). Community-based tourism provides local people with a high quality of life, driving a greater value of traditional culture and conserving the natural environment through tourism planning and management thus leading to sustainable tourism (Khalid, 2019). The social exchange theory by George C Homans explains that residents determine their support for tourism development depending on their perceptions of the positive or the negative impacts on them. Therefore, getting community support and their participation will depend on the benefit they gain from the tourism industry. To succeed the community tourism activities, it is vital that fair distribution of tourism benefits among the communities. Tourism helps communities hold onto their unique natural and cultural heritage, supporting conservation, safeguarding endangered species, and keeping traditions and flavors alive as stated by Zurab Pololikashvili, Secretary General, World Tourism Organization in AIUla framework for inclusive community development through tourism 2020.

Trincomalee is the best tourism destination in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka. This destination attracts many tourists with its unique environment and water sports as same as pristine beaches. The city is embedded in historicity as it is referred to as Gokanna in the Mahavamsa (Great Chronicle), and its Shiva temple is the site of Trikuta Hill in the Hindu text Vayu Purana. It makes a great stopover on the way to the nearby beaches of Uppuveli and Nilaveli. Trincomalee with its natural and cultural diversity has been identified as a potential tourist destination in Sri Lanka. In response growing trends and demand, local operators have commenced tourism and related businesses there. These tourism potentials could be maximized to gain many financial benefits by engaging communities in the destination in tourism activities.

2. Background of the case study

There is great tourism potential in Trincomalee. However, doubts and concerns have been raised as to whether the community is positioned to reap the full benefits from the mode of tourist practices that are currently in place. It has been observed that some MSMEs (micro-small and medium-sized entrepreneurs) were not in a position to sustain their business for a variety of reasons like lack of knowledge of product and service standards, less literacy of marketing and technology, and less capability to identify opportunities and partnerships, etc. The ecotourism industry is popular in the Trincomalee district due to its rich biodiversity and scenic beauty associated with the sea and the coastal belt, but there are several social and environmental issues because of many reasons such as lack of knowledge and bad management practices (Kaleel, 2017). However, tourism's many benefits have still to be fully deployed. The sector is not just a leading source of employment. It also promotes territorial cohesion and socioeconomic inclusion for the most vulnerable communities, says Zurab Pololikashvili, Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization. The concept of community-based tourism comes to attention as an innovative sustainable product to the tourism industry and there is a good demand in the global tourism market (Arcana & Wiweka, 2015).

The Skill for Inclusive Growth (S4IG), an initiative of the Australian Government, has come forward to become the funding agency for the sustainable community tourism product development project. It contributes to sustainable job creation, increased income, and business growth for marginalized and disadvantaged people, particularly women and people with disabilities by showcasing and demonstrating skills development innovations and replicable models across the tourism value chain. The S4IG aims for a community development project to enhance community skills to provide better services to tourists to meet their expected service quality while uplifting the quality of life of the community in Trincomalee. The objectives of the project are:

- a) To define community-based tourism products, uniqueness, and marketing elements.
- b) To justify how the tourism products, define that align with Key Performance Indicators.
- c) To enrich and enhance the unique characteristics of community-based tourism products.
- d) To reshape the tour products according to present market demand.

- e) Understand market needs through market analysis and prepare community-based tourism products to meet the tourism industry standards with the required skills.

To meet those objectives the present case study focuses on the baseline survey evaluating the following elements.

- TAG (Tour Activity Group) identification and information.
- Identify TAG capability.
- Health, Hygiene, and safety factors.
- Potentials and resources.
- Marketing elements.
- Product assessment.

Based on this baseline survey this study identified the 6 potential sustainable community tourism activities and potential communities to consult and develop community tourism.

- 1) Authentic food experiences/Tamil/Sinhala/Muslim.
- 2) Snorkeling.
- 3) Palmyrah Products and experience.
- 4) Lagoon-based tour activities.
- 5) Nature Walk.
- 6) Traditional folk dance and songs.

The project identified one leader from each group and link all the groups with the leaders. This project conducted a training need assessment and identified the required training needs to fill the training gap. The project provided guidelines to make improvements working with each TAG group to make them confident and get the maximum outcome of their performance in community tourism. The project delivered opportunities for the community to provide their services to the tourist as a test run and improve the sustainable tourism product with the tourist feedback. The project organized a familiarization tour to the pinner destination management companies to open marketing opportunities to the community.

3. Evaluation

The case study focuses on the Trincomalee area to develop sustainable community-based tourism products and potential host communities in the area. The project's main objective is to provide income diversification for those who are not in the tourism supply chain and enhance the service quality of community tourism operators to generate higher yields.

3.1. Empowering of local communities

The inclusion of communities especially youth, women and ethnic, indigenous groups, and their representatives in co-leading the processes of consultation and decision-making for planning, developing, and managing the 'destination' should take full priority. Community development through tourism should start and end with the community's well-being, economic, social, cultural, and environmental at the core. (UNWTO, 2020) In this project,

community empowerment is the main core focusing on youth, women, and ethnic groups, so they to sustain their own when the project was developed. All members of TAG take part in the planning and development of the project because using their tacit knowledge was so important to the success of the community projects. The main goal of this project is to uplift the quality of life in the community of Trincomalee with well-being and socioeconomic, cultural, and environmental benefits.

Empowerment is described as the power to do something on an individual or collective level. Empowerment can be a useful tool to improve the capacities and assets of local communities, both individually and collectively, community empowerment needs community members' engagement and collective action rather than individual action (Ahmad & Talib, 2015).

Sustainable tourism is difficult to develop without the support of residents. Thus, residents' support is a critical factor for sustainable tourism development. Residents' involvement in decision-making and a positive attitude towards tourism is essential for tourism sustainability (Canalejo, Tabales, López, & Fuentes-García, 2015). The project focuses on community values and their way of life and extra care that tourism is an alternative income source for them while protecting their primary income sources like agriculture and farming for the resilience of the project and sustainability.

3.2 The public-private community partnerships (PPCP) approach

PPCP is a symbiotically operational model designed to achieve inclusive local and sustainable development. A PPCP approach enables the three parties to collectively develop tourism product(s)/service(s) for mutual benefit through jointly assuming risks and responsibilities while sharing resources and competencies. (UNWTO, 2020) The project fully focuses on developing the partnership among communities and all tourism stakeholders like government, hotels, transport providers, guides, and destination management companies to market the products. Therefore, all the aspects of the sustainable community tourism initiatives covered by the project are presented in this case study.

4. Finding and Recommendations

Members of the community in Trincomalee were willing to join with tourism sector but stated that they did not have possible opportunities. In addition the community-involved with existing tourism activities expects more opportunities and skills to develop their businesses. Furthermore, problems were caused by a lack of information. It was acknowledged that a crucial requirement was at least a fundamental awareness on topics including business and financial management, biodiversity protection, tourism product development, and experience management. The project created a series of community training sessions to fill the knowledge gap. Basic ideas of the identified demands were elaborated to them in an intelligible fashion during the training session. The project suggested various value additions to individual operators to improve the marketability and appeal of their products. They were given the necessary models and sustainable projects to follow.

- a) The fair share of the benefits among the community TAG group for project viability. Therefore, transparent financial management and improved recording are vital factors.
- b) Community involvement from the planning stage is most important to build community ownership of the products to sustain the project.
- c) Providing continuous training to fill the knowledge gap is important to provide quality and standard service to tourists.
- d) Develop a network and partnership with all stakeholders of the tourism industry.
- e) Make all community members aware of sustainable community tourism and its global value and potential.
- f) Keep monitoring and evaluation mechanisms going for continuous improvement focusing on emerging trends
- g) Promoting and branding the project as a sustainable community tourism project to other tourism stakeholders to join the project as their CSR (corporate social responsibility) initiative.

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Pictogram



Authentic food - gastronomy tourism



Sea water-based activities – marine tourism



Palmyrah tapping products – experiential
tourism



Local handicrafts



Lagoon-based tour activities - responsible
tourism



Mangrove replantation

A CASE STUDY ON PROMOTING SRI LANKAN TRADITIONAL RICE IN JETWING KADURUKETHA

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Keywords: Traditional rice, agro- tourism, sustainable tourism

1. Overview

The varieties of rice passed down from preceding generations are known as ‘traditional’, ‘indigenous’ or ‘inheritance’ rice varieties of Sri Lanka. Due to the formation of the country, weather patterns, climatic zones and agro – culture, Sri Lanka has a rich diversity of traditional rice and farmers have lot of experience and knowledge in traditional paddy farming. There is a growing demand for traditional rice varieties, being a healthy choice and many tests have been performed now in Sri Lanka to prove that many nutrients have been found in all traditional Sri Lankan rice varieties. The research study is to examine the current situation of traditional paddy farming in Sri Lanka and the potential of promoting traditional rice in the country enabling its use in sustainable tourism practices.

2. Background of the case study

Sri Lanka is one of the biodiversity hotspots in the world. As a staple food of Sri Lanka, rice has been feeding the nation since ancient times. This is mainly due to Sri Lanka being an agricultural country from its very beginning. Based on findings of residues in the artifacts such as painted clay dishes discovered from archaeological sites, it has been estimated that rice cultivation existed since 600 BC in Sri Lanka. Traditional rice varieties have been conserved, developed and used by Lankan farmers for over 3,000 years. The varieties of rice passed down from preceding generations are known as ‘traditional’, ‘indigenous’ or ‘inheritance’ rice varieties of Sri Lanka. Ancient and traditional paddy cultivation practices were completely organic and did not cause any harm to the surrounding environment or health. The practices of 20th Century agricultural technology (high-input required varieties, soil devastating machinery, environmentally hazardous agro-chemicals and inorganic fertilizer), have posed a serious threat to the survival of the traditional agricultural system in Sri Lanka. Due to the formation of the country, weather patterns, climatic zones and agro-culture, Sri Lanka has a rich diversity of traditional rice and farmers have lot of experience and knowledge of traditional paddy farming. With rapidly increasing tourist arrivals and a keen interest shown in agro-tourism and culture, it is ideal to promote sustainable agriculture and farming among foreign guests. There is a growing demand for traditional varieties being a healthy choice and many tests have been performed now in Sri Lanka to prove that many nutrients have been found in all traditional rice varieties of Sri Lankan rice. With two million Lankans currently suffering from diabetes, it has

been discovered that rice bran is rich in an enzyme which converts sugar into glucose. There is a significant potential to promote traditional rice locally as well.

The study is to examine the current situation of traditional paddy farming in Sri Lanka and the potential of promoting traditional rice in the country. Considering those points, there is a significant potential to promote traditional rice as well and add value to promote agro-tourism. Within the 50 acres of paddy land at Jetwing Kaduruketha, traditional rice was introduced in September 2018 to be farmed organically. 20 rice varieties were experimented with from which Pachchaperumal, Kahawanu and Suwandel were selected. While initially 10 acres were converted to traditional, its success has seen area for traditional farming increasing up to 25 acres in 2019 and currently traditional rice are cultivated in 50 acres.

3. Evaluation of the case

Sri Lanka, once famed as the ‘Granary of the East’, has a rich agricultural history and for centuries, paddy cultivation was a way of life that shaped our society, culture, religion and economy. Renowned archaeologist, Prof. Siran Upendra Deraniyagala, believes that paddy cultivation in Sri Lanka dates back 2,900 years, which is as early as 900 BC. However, Dr. Ratnasiri Premathilaka’s research revealed that 15,000-17,000 years old pollen grains of *Oryza* paddy varieties were found in an excavation at Fa-Hien Cave, Bulathsinhala. Prof. Indrakeerthi Siraweera confirms that the first paddy cultivation in Sri Lanka was spread over the dry valleys of Malwathu Oya, Deduru Oya and Kala Oya.

Paddy is a cereal crop which belongs to the genus Gramineae. China and India are considered as the homelands of paddy. *Oryza sativa* is cultivated in Sri Lanka, India and other Asian countries. Also, *Oryza galaberina* is considered as the African rice plant. Agriculture is an important and dynamic part of Sri Lanka’s economy and way of life, and contributes significantly to the country’s unique identity. Over 25 percent of Sri Lankans are employed in the agricultural sector. Sri Lanka is blessed with an abundance of natural resources and its people have enjoyed making a living from the gifts of nature from the land and sea for centuries. The primary form of agriculture in Sri Lanka is rice production. Rice – the staple food of the island nation – is cultivated during the Yala (April-July) and Maha (November-February) seasons and to date, Sri Lankans follow traditional rituals centered on preparation of the fields and the harvesting of the grains.

4. Proposed Solution/Changes

Organic farming is becoming popular in Southeast Asia as part of sustainable agriculture systems. Sustainable farming is a system that is beneficial to the entire ecosystem, including humans, with minimal external applications without harming the environment and natural resources. Conventional farming may look productive in the short term but is not sustainable, with the village’s ecosystem being deteriorated by external inputs and improper human activities. Jetwing’s Kaduruketha paddy farming takes into consideration the positive aspects of traditional paddy farming and follows the above concepts of sustainable farming. Agro-forestry combines agriculture and forestation and focuses on the interaction between the two.

Responsibly cultivating crops or raising livestock with integrated forest cover improves soil quality and biodiversity, increases the variety and quantity of agricultural produce, and decreases deforestation resulting from agricultural expansion. Agro-forestry involves a wide range of trees that are protected, regenerated, planted or managed in agricultural landscapes as they interact with annual crops, livestock, wildlife and humans.

5. Recommendations

The term ‘Agri’ derives from Latin term ager which means ‘field’. Combination of the prefix ‘agri’ with ‘tourism’ gives the meaning of field or farm tourism. That means tourism based on farms or spending the vacation on farms. Agri tourism is defined as “any business or activity that invites visitors to come to a farm or ranch to enjoy agriculture and farming experiences and the natural resources” (Kuhlen et al., 1998) Agri-tourism and agro-tourism are similar but agro-tourism falls within agri-tourism and specifically considers soil related agriculture and crop cultivation, excluding livestock.

Agrotourism has been around for longer than anyone might think. The simple history of agrotourism summarized that development of history itself related to human development along with world technologies (Camilleri, 2018). The history of agrotourism was discussed by the expert from the University of Tennessee Extension Publication by considering it as Agritainment. Agritainment (agrotourism and entertainment farming enterprises), created within the 1800s, when families visited farming relatives to flee from the town and knowledge farming (Bauer, 2011).

Agrotourism gives many opportunities to small and medium farms. Those kinds of opportunities are increased farm income, the generation of cash flow, and a chance for economic diversification, expanding marketing and farm brand awareness and smoothing seasonal fluctuations in farm revenue that are customary among many 14 forms of agriculture. Agrotourism gives many opportunities to small and medium farms. Those kinds of opportunities are increased farm income, the generation of cash flow, and a chance for economic diversification, expanding marketing and farm brand awareness and smoothing seasonal fluctuations in farm revenue that are customary among many 14 forms of agriculture.

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Pictogram

PACHCHAPERUMAL
 - Provides energy
 - Controls diabetes
 - High percentage of iron and protein

KURULUTHUDA
 - Used for the prevention of urinary tract infections
 - Builds body strength

POKKALI
 - Rich in protein
 - Antibacterial properties

TRADITIONAL RICE VARIETIES

සුවන්දේ
 Suwandel

පච්චපරුමල්
 Pachchaperumal

කහවැනු
 Kahawanu

රන්රුවන්
 Ranruwan

රත්දේල්
 Rathdel

කලු හිනාටි
 Kalu hinati

පොක්කලි
 Pokkali

කුරුලුතඳා
 Kuruluthuda

රත්කඳා
 Rathkanda



BIODIVERSITY AS A USP TO PROMOTING MEDICAL TOURISM IN SRI LANKA

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Keywords: Medical tourism, biodiversity, Unique Selling proposition-USP, competitive advantage

1. Overview

Sri Lanka has embarked on developing the medical tourism industry during the last two decades and is considered an excellent destination for medical tourism with high-quality western medical expertise and traditional knowledge of ayurvedic treatments combined with the country's rich biodiversity which directly help to cure many medical conditions and balance physical and mental wellness of needy people. Global partnership for business and biodiversity defines biodiversity as the variety of life in all its forms including plants, animals, and microbes that exist and interact in the various biological communities and ecosystems. In this study using biodiversity as a positive and influencing factor for promoting Sri Lanka as a destination for medical tourism is discussed and other contributing factors supporting the concept are recommended for policy formulation and to develop of marketing strategies to gain a competitive advantage over the other destinations.

2. Background of the case study

The Ministry of Health of Sri Lanka defines medical tourism as “a form of health tourism commonly refers to the travel of people to another country to obtain medical treatment in that country” (Epidemiology Unit publication, vol 48, 2021). Historically, people traveling to obtain medical treatment that was unavailable in their countries were recorded but the term medical tourism and its features as a tourist product became popular during the last decade. Nevertheless, the trend of traveling to developed countries from developing countries has changed because of cost considerations. . For medical tourists, the cost of medical treatment, even including travel and accommodation, in Sri Lanka is on average, cheaper by 50 percent. (Health Tourism Report, EDB, 2017). Another reason for travel for medical treatment to developing countries such as Sri Lanka is the availability of highly trained medical specialists and the affordable healthcare facilities available countrywide.

The data available from the Ministry of Health and the Department of Census and Statistics indicate that a two-percent increase in arrivals of medical tourists in 2019 mainly on wellness programmes which are again defined as a type of medical tourism. Hence, this case study attempts to provide solutions to establish Sri Lanka as a destination for medical tourism

and improve the country's appeal by using the benefits of biodiversity as a unique selling proposition -USP. "Differentiation is one of the most important strategic and tactical activities in which companies must constantly engage," says Levitt, Theodore [(1986) *The marketing imagination* (New, expanded ed.). New York: Free Press]. Accordingly, to differentiate from competitors, Sri Lanka can use the unique features of biodiversity especially Species Biodiversity and ecological Biodiversity which cannot be matched by any other destination in the region. "Sri Lanka is a country full of biodiversity which is gifted with many plant resources. It has been reported that there are 3,771 flowering plant species grown in Sri Lanka. Out of them about 927 (24 percent) are endemic to the country. Also, 1,430 species are considered to have medicinal value. Gunawardana, S, K. & Jayasuriya. *Medicinally Important Herbal Flowers in Sri Lanka*-(2019). Hence highlighting these unique features to attract medical tourists will create interest not only among the patients but also in the nature lovers segment too.

3. Evaluation

Medical tourism services could include cosmetic, wellness, and dental treatments, and have been collectively called medical tourism (Connell, 2006; Turner, 2011). They highlight the exotic environments for relaxing and rejuvenating facilities, greater hospitality, and personal care to meet the competitiveness of the market. WTO is insisting on environmental sustainability by optimizing the use of environmental resources and helping to conserve natural resources and biodiversity. Few other factors making a destination a preferred medical tourism venue is:

- The cost of services
- Impact of the cultural, social, and natural environments for medical tourism
- Ease of travel to destination

The growth of Medical and Health Tourism in Sri Lanka can be much higher if adequate focus is given to using the natural environment for promoting the product. Some of the main advantages that have are the biodiversity of the country such as the warm tropical climate with adequate rainfalls thereby making the country rich with plant life most with aromatic and medicinal compounds. Sri Lanka's historical connection to Ayurveda treatment and meditation using natural medicinal plants, roots, and oils together with the kind, loving caring services of Sri Lankan medical professionals are the key motivating factors for sidestepping famous Indian wellness centers to visit Sri Lanka.

Green mountains and waterways and waterfalls and sunny beaches provide an ideal place to improve recuperation and add to the country's appeal as a leading Wellness Tourism destination. With a widespread network of Western and Ayurveda medical treatment centers at every major city and hotel with exciting wellness packages, travelers will receive a holistic wellness experience with a selection of treatment packages in conducive environment.

Apart from the wellness tourist, the availability of facilities for medical treatments is limited to major hospitals in the main cities in the country. Few private hospitals specialized in medical tourism having partnered with international agents for the same. The Lanka Hospital,

Navaloka Hospital in Colombo, and Hema's Hospitals in suburban cities are providing medical tourism.

4. Findings and Recommendations

Promoting medical tourism in Sri Lanka's rich biodiversity as a USP has many advantages and the country can benefit more from this sector if the respective stakeholders in tourism development focus their attention on the following factors.

- a) Strengthen the Regulatory systems for the delivery of medical services that rank high on parameters of quality. There are many illegal operations reported recently that harm the concept of medical tourism and the paramount principle in this service is safety which needs to be safeguarded 100%.
- b) Establish effective multi-stakeholder partnerships to maintain biodiversity. All stakeholders, especially the hoteliers and travel agents needed to be joined to protect the environment from pollution and maintain the delicate balance of ecosystems.
- c) To keep the cost of healthcare services at an affordable level to attract people from the region together with medical, and insurance related to cosmetic surgery, fertility treatment, and dental reconstruction.
- d) Systematic planning of service centers and hospitals to specialize in medical tourism is vital to multiply the positive effects of the industry. Stakeholders need to identify and agree on the selected medical tourist destinations which have more favorable ecological sensitivity, natural resources, and climatical conditions to attract more tourists through a varied consumer choice.
- e) Building the capacity of local producers and service providers to meet market requirements from specialized doctors to spa assistants to provide a quality service that needs zero errors.
- f) The other main product of medical tourism, ayurvedic treatments, needs to be promoted more to create a niche market. It is easily branded due to the authenticity of having practiced the ayurveda for hundreds of years. Ayurvedic centers and the promotion of the usefulness of ayurvedic treatment in a natural environment will increase the demand for the service throughout the world.

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A CASE STUDY OF AGRO TOURISM POTENTIALS IN SRI LANKA: SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE UDUGAMA VILLAGE

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Keywords: Agro tourism, rural development, poverty

1. Overview:

Community-based tourism is an ideal type of tourism to promote among the locals to provide them with economic advantages which may enhance their wellbeing. The community-based tourism concept is highlighted in this case study with reference to the potentials related to agro tourism in the Udugama village. Community tourism, which is known as a poverty reduction tool involves with sharing the lifestyle of the locals with tourists and experience the local culture, traditions and customs. The Udugama village consists of people who are depending on agriculture. This area is selected mainly after seeing the potential of promoting agro tourism. The main objective of the case study is to identify the potentials to promote agro tourism concept to reduce poverty in the village. The specific objectives are analyses annual income from agro based activities and satisfaction, identify the areas the chances and generate additional income with agro truism, identify limitation of them related agro activities and give recommendations to promote agro tourism to reduce poverty of the local community.

2. Background of the case study

Sri Lankan government has introduced homestay tourism as an option to match the increasing accommodation demand of the country while empowering local community's contribution in tourism activities. Homestay has been described as a complex socio-cultural and economic exchange process (Ahamed et al, 2011). The homestay tourism is a potential segment for Sri Lankan tourism. Therefore, through proper planning and management and the active involvement of all the key stakeholders the market can be developed successfully. However, the government should play the key role actively and honestly. Also, it is necessary develop a national level homestay association with the involvement of all the stakeholders. Some villagers have experienced a change in their way of life affected by the emergence of tourism and homestay in the village. The carrying capacity of the village still needs to be carefully considered to reduce the negative consequences and to reach the purpose of sustainable community development (Wanna & Kevin, 2012).

3. Evaluation of the case

With special reference to Sri Lanka which has a great history related agriculture. One of small village is selected as an appropriate area to promote this concept. Udugama is a village which is situated seven kilometers from the Matale town. Around 75 percent of villagers engage in agricultural activities as their main occupation. This study engaged in analyzing their annual income, satisfaction, expenses, history, strengths, and limitations.

The main part of this research is covered with that information received from primary data collected by interviewing several people from the community. Secondary data were collected by reviewing research journals, books, magazines and reports. The study mainly analyses the potentials to promote in the village and recommend the appropriate the recommendations to promote agro tourism as a tool of regional development to the particular village.

4. Proposed Solution/Changes

The village has almost all nature endowed potentials to promote agro tourism with its rich soil, natural irrigation systems, mountain range around the village, enough spaces to cultivate vegetables, rice, fruits, spices and other commercial plants, etc. The stakeholders were facing limitations such as low demand, transportation barriers, high commotion to the intermediaries, pest control, spread harvest diseases, lack of knowledge in tourism to promote this concept. An analysis of the annual income of the villagers showed that the per capita income was at Rs 70,200. This per capita income could be increased by promoting agro tourism concepts.

The areas which can generate additional income to the villagers:

- a) Making jam from crops such as tomato, mango and pineapple when there is surplus of harvest and sell them to the tourists
- b) Promoting packaging of dried spices such as white pepper and cinnamon and sell them to the tourists
- c) Making arrangements to have space for cooking in cultivating areas so that meals could prepared from the plants at those places to serve to the tourists
- d) Promote the traditional 'Kamatha' concept to perform traditional dances and concept to the foreigners.
- e) Make home stay concept to the selected homes
- f) Promoting mountain climbing, bicycling, bird watching, kiting, photography and similar activities within the village and surrounding areas

5. Recommendations

Sri Lanka is suitable to introduce and implement the new form of tourism. The researcher collected information to promote main type of community tourism known as agro Tourism. This research analyzed and identified the potentials to promote agro tourism in the Udugama village to recommend means and methods to promote agro tourism to reduce poverty of the villagers. The recommendations are as follows:

- Create a database of the villagers who are actively engaging agriculture
- Gather information about the time period which is better to grow particular crops
- Arrange tourist activities in the ‘Kamatha’, ‘Janakavi’, traditional dances and recreational activities.
- Make traditional cuisine area to cook and serve food to the foreigners in the cultivation premises
- Arrange space to sell direct to the foreigners the products such as vegetables, fruits, spices, plants etc.
- Arrange home stay concept with proper regulations from tourism authorities.
- Coordinate with nearest travel agencies, tour operators and tour guides and investors to initiate the market
- Create a taxi service, site guides, sign boards, facilities to the tourists with negotiating the villagers in the village

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A CASE STUDY OF COMMUNITY TOURISM AND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

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Keywords: Community tourism, Rakshagala, wilderness trails, economic benefits

1. Overview

Nawalapitiya is a small town located in the Kandy District, Pasbage Korale Divisional Secretariat of the Central Province of Sri Lanka. Situated at a distance of 40 km from Kandy and 100 km from Colombo, the town is at about 589 meters above sea level. The population is a multi-cultural mix which has about 14 percent of Muslims, 38 percent of Tamils, and 47 percent of Sinhalese. They coexist peacefully. The Nawalapitiya Railway station happens to be the second longest station in Sri Lanka as such trains plying from there pass through several towns and cities in the country. The Rakshagala, Kinihira Mountain, and the Raxawa Estate village community are located approximately 23.6km from the Nawalapitiya town. The main livelihood of the community is associated with the tea industry. During the past decade there has been an increase in adventure tourism in hiking Kabaragala Mountain located at Dolosbage close to Rakshagala. Most of the times, the local tourists hike the mountain without the assistance of any guides. The flat top of Rakshagala has its jungle. It is simply a 150m climb straight up the jungle-covered northeast face of the mountain known as the walls of Ravana's fortress. From a distance, this hard cap rock summit looks like an ancient fortress, built to dominate its surroundings, and it is this shape that has given the mountain its most lyrical title - Rakshagala, the 'Rock of the Rakshasas'. Folktales about this scenic place are abundant and the most popular being that King Ravana of the Ramayana epic held Sita, who had been kidnapped from Ram in India, in a cave in this mountain and that cave still has the golden bed used by Sita. According to some legends, the people of the Yaksha tribe in ancient Lanka had their armoury in this mountain. Another legend says that the King Dutta Gamani had a brass workshop in the mountain to manufacture his weapons. King Rajadhi Rajasinghe in the Kandyan Kingdom too is said to have used the place as an armoury.

2. Background of the case study

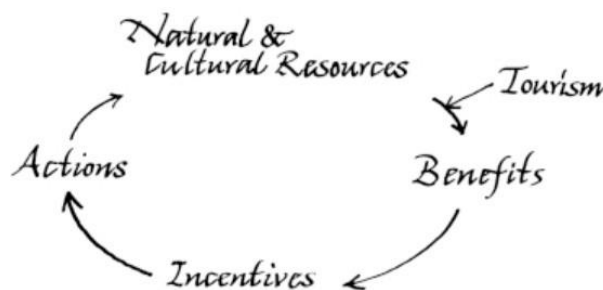
Community tourism is a development tool that strengthens the ability of rural communities to manage tourism resources while ensuring the local community's participation. It is managed and owned by the community, for the community, to enable visitors to increase their awareness and learn about the community and local ways of life.

Community tourism can help the local community in generating income, diversify the local economy, preserving culture, conserving the environment and providing educational opportunities. Community tourism is a way of sustainable tourism concept it is believed that an extension of eco-tourism.

The following assumptions have been made regarding the objectives of community tourism:

- Community-based tourism must contribute to increasing and/or improving the conservation of natural and/or cultural resources, including biological diversity, water, forests, cultural landscapes, monuments, etc.
- Community-based tourism must contribute to local economic development through increasing tourism revenues and other benefits to community participants, and ideally to an increasing number of participants.
- Community-based tourism must have a level of participation, ideally progressing toward self-mobilization, but not always necessarily so; and
- Community-based tourism has a duty to the visitor to provide a socially and environmentally responsible product
- Community tourism through increased participation can provide widespread economic and other benefits and decision-making power to communities. These economic benefits act as incentives for participants and the means to conserve the natural and cultural resources on which income generation depends (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Relationship between Resources and Actions in Community Tourism



Source: CBT for Conservation and Development, Resource KIT

For community-based tourism to be successful it is important to be aware of and incorporate critical linkages with other scales and sectors of operation. Furthermore, these linkages will need to be improved to sustain conservation and development benefits. There may be a tendency to idealize the value of community-based tourism and focus on retaining and redistributing benefits entirely to the community level. Community-based tourism cannot be seen and should not be planned in isolation from other sectors and stakeholders. The concept of comparative advantage is critical. Frequently it will not make economic and logistical sense for local communities to handle every operation and transaction to recoup economic benefits. Furthermore, the ability of community-based tourism to generate benefits is often tied into key policies that originate from a variety of sectors, e.g. government agencies handling forests, protected areas, tourism, finance, visitor permits, and movements, tourism, agriculture, commerce and so on, plus international policies and treaties that influence.

3. Evaluation of the case

The data was collected during two field visits to the Rakshagala, Kinihira Mountain, and Raxawa village communities. The visits were conducted in August 2021 and in March 2022. Ecological information was collected by personal observation on the way to the summit. Village community data were collected using a structured questionnaire under the following headings:

- Basic household information
- Household belongings
- Water supply and sanitation facilities
- Income, expenditure, Savings, and credit
- Animal husbandry
- Satisfaction of basic needs
- Time allocation of males and females
- Social problems
- Belief, rituals, and cast system

Interviews were conducted in Tamil language despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions to understand the role of non-economic members of the community and to find the missing link between conservation and community tourism.

4. Proposed solution/changes

Rakshagala, Kinihira Mountain, and Raxawa Estate village communities could be trained and provided with required know-how on improving on their status quo to become active stakeholders to promote community based tourism and thereby contribute to the betterment of the national economy. The area has cultural, archaeological, religious as well as environmental importance unparalleled to many other popular tourist destinations in Sri Lanka. There are ruins of archaeological monuments as well as ancient Hindu temples. Refer figure 2: Hindu temple, Lord Siva (Shiva lingam), Lord Ganesh

The hikers can enjoy the serenity of tea plantations at the foothills of the mountain and can enjoy the tropical forest containing plenty of Kirala *Sonneratia* species, Rata tana, *Panicum maximum*, tropical rain forests, dry evergreen mountain forest with Katu Una, *Bambusa vulgaris* on their way to the Rakshagala summit. Katu Una *Bambusa vulgaris* and Rata tana *Panicum maximum* are currently used to manufacture tea puckers' baskets.

Table 1: Tangible benefits from natural resources at Rakshagala, Kinihira mountain forest

Plant Name	Scientific Name	Tangible Benefits
<i>Kitul</i>	<i>Caryota urens</i>	Treacle, jaggery, flour, vinegar, and toddy
<i>Nika</i>	<i>Vitex negundo</i>	The medicinal plant, oil
<i>Kirala</i>	<i>Sonneratia species</i>	Juice

<i>Epala bata</i>	<i>Arundo donax</i>	Paper Production
<i>Rata tana</i>	<i>Panicum maximum</i>	Natural Handmade Items (Tissue box, Dustbin, and Fruit basket)
<i>Enasal</i>	<i>Elettaria cardamomum</i>	Spice, soaps, creams, and perfumes
<i>Kochin sera</i>	<i>Cymbopogon citratus</i>	Food, medicinal, oil, soap and perfumes

Source: Observation during the field visit

On the way to the summit, many ruins including rocks with inscriptions can be found. A typological analysis on inscriptions indicates that they belong to a much later period after the Sinhala script had fully evolved. Owing to these ruins and curiosities fuelled by folktales, the area has been dug up by the treasure hunters several times in the past. Refer figure 3: inscription on rock near the summit and figure 4: Rakshagala Summit.

5. Recommendations

Prospects are there to promote Rakshagala as a novel destination for community tourism. It is recommended that awareness campaigns of several modes should be held to help people of the community change their attitudes and to have a correct understanding of the potentials of promoting community tourism and how they could be benefited from that venture.

The Rakshagala Kinihira Mountain Forest requires urgent conservation. If not, desertification contributes to the accelerated loss of biodiversity. It is recommended to formulate a sound community tourism model focusing on conservation helping the village community with long-term economic benefits.

Action has to be taken to survey and record the status quo of the geographical area of the village and to clear the area of poaching wires, snares such as ‘Hakka patas’ put up by villagers as well as to ensure that area is free from the threats of the treasure hunters vandalizing the archaeological ruins in search of treasure troves referred in the folk tales and mythic legends.

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Pictogram



Source: Captured during field visit Rakshagala, Kinihira

Figure 3: Inscriptions on rock near the summit



Source: Captured during field visit Rakshagala, Kinihira

Figure 4: Rakshagala Summit



Source: Captured during field visit Rakshagala, Kinihira

A CASE STUDY ON NEW DIMENSIONS OF COMMUNITY- BASED TOURISM PROTECTING PURPLE-FACED LANGUR (PFL) AND ASSOCIATED BIODIVERSITY

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Keywords: Purple-faced Langur, biodiversity, community-based tourism, Sri Lanka

1. Overview

Rethinking after the pandemic situation and cascade of economic crisis, the country needs to be rebuilt with potential economic and sustainable development endeavors. Conventional cultural or environmental tourism has been practiced for many decades, by enhancing the economic growth of the industry. Community-based tourism is important in the development of the local economy as a direct income source for poor communities. This case study is proposed to show a new dimension of community-based tourism linked to Purple-faced Langur (PFL) also called Purple-faced leaf monkey (Sinhala- Kalu wandura) and associated biodiversity. This large, long-tailed arboreal primate is endemic to Sri Lanka and lives in rural, semi-urban, and urban environments, mostly with the association of forests, forest patches, and wetland floral environments. Communities can organize tours to visit them in their natural habitats for those who are interested in seeing and observing their behaviors combined with hikes through forests full of plants and wildflowers, and other animal species that these ecosystems have to offer. It's a common tourism practice in some other countries to target on their particular animal-watching in the eco-tourism sector.

2. Evaluation

Purple-faced leaf monkeys (PFL) and their four sub-species are endemic to Sri Lanka. Their habitats can be found in lowlands of Western Sri Lanka, north of the Kalu Ganga. Due to rapid urbanization and many environmental problems, their habitats and associated ecosystems are facing threats.

Communities that live near to forest patches, semi-urban and urban residences are facing certain problems because of PFL, such as damage to the crops, damages to the roof of the houses, and damages to the power supply and telecommunication infrastructure, etc. However, the damage and destruction caused by the PFL is very low when its impact is compared to the damages inflicted by the Toque Macaque (the *Macaca sinica*), another species that are very active and forage for food for a large part of everyday.

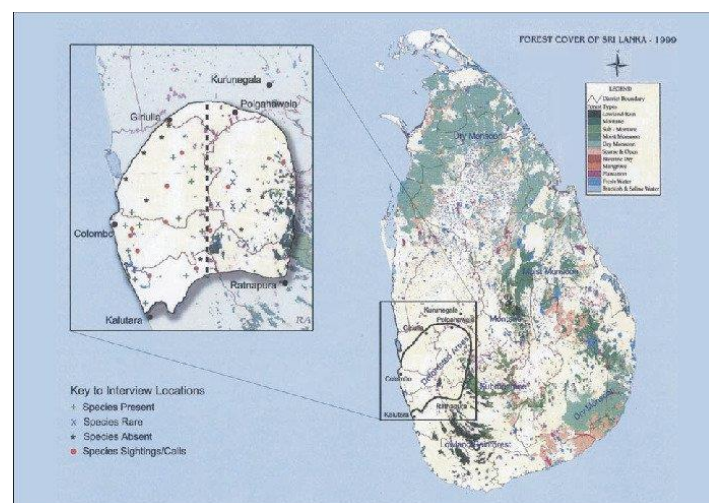
From the tourist's point of view, this large primate is an interesting subject for observation; especially, the social gathering, habits, and movements are eye-catching.

The functions of the present environmental tourism are limited to key companies, groups and tour guides. They do not actively coordinate with the communities living surrounding the particular forest areas. If they do so both parties will get direct economic benefits from tourism. Toque Macaque is very much highlighted due to certain audio-visual programs and also tourists are already interested to see them. But their uncontrolled distribution and damage to the crops have created a very negative overall picture. Still such issues have not come up with PFL and before the conflict gets worse the PFL related conservation strategies should be implemented.

3. Solutions / Recommendations- Towards planning into practice

This case study on community based tourism of PFL and associated biodiversity recommended certain points towards sustainable eco-tourism:

- Highlight and promote PFL as the endemic large primate of the country and its association with the village, semi-urban and urban biodiversity.
- Monkey watching could be promoted as a new theme similar to the themes such as bird watching and elephant watching.
- Hotels, restaurants and leisure paces can be established in such potential urban areas to cater the needs of the tourists.
- Identify CBOs through GNs and DSs to select the particular capable and interest individuals to join the monkey watching activities.
- Always salute the knowledge of local communities, integration of such PFL related observation, knowledge and practices are very much interested by associating with local people.
- These tourism engagements indirectly enhance the income of the surrounded communities, such as small vendors, local transport providers, etc.
- In addition to above there are many benefits and opportunities can be obtained by executing community based tourism of PFL and associated biodiversity for various groups from local to international levels including the researchers.



Distribution map of Western PFL. Source: A survey of Sri Lanka's endangered and endemic western purple-faced langur, R. Rudren, 2007.