

STUDY ON THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF TOURISM IN THE EASTERN PROVINCE OF SRI LANKA

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Abstract

While tourism plays a positive role in the socio-cultural, economic, environmental and political development and represents a significant development opportunity for many countries and communities, it has negative impacts too. If it is not identified and rectified in its initial stage, tourism may lead to severe damage to the country's socio-cultural and natural environment. Therefore, the main objective of this study is to identify the specific socio, economic and environmental impact of tourism in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka. This study covered three major tourist areas of Trincomalee, Batticaloa, and Ampara in the Eastern Province. Perceptions on the impact of tourism on economy, socio-culture and environment by a sample of 2,500 respondents from diverse stakeholders were collected through interviewer- administered questionnaire. Secondary data were collected from reports, publications, and articles. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with residents living in the Eastern Province by an experienced team. Collected data were analyzed using various statistical tools with the help of statistical software. Perceptions of respondents revealed a positive economic impact of tourism. However, the study also found a negative impact on social and cultural terms in the Eastern Province. At the same time, results did not show any significant negative impact on the environment. Further, results revealed that, although tourism has provided employment opportunities and helped the economy of the province, the economic benefit deserved by local people is not delivered. The findings of this study will be helpful for policymakers and authorities for planning in the future. In general, the broader objective of this study is to promote the tourism industry as a major contributor to the country's economy, to achieve balanced regional development, to decrease the regional disparity and to focus on the potential of the region, to maximize economic gain through sustainable development.

Keywords: Tourism, Economic, Social, Environment, Eastern Province, Sri Lanka

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1. Introduction

Tourism refers to travel to another destination for recreation, leisure, or business. It is one of the progressive industries in the world and impacts on almost every other industry. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2017) international tourist arrivals grew by 4.4 percent in 2015 over 2014. UNWTO forecasts international tourist arrivals to reach 1.8 billion by 2030.

Sri Lanka is a tropical island and is a land of diversity in biological, socio-cultural and environmental terms and they all are tourist attractions and demands. Sri Lanka, as a tourist destination, boasts eight different tourist attractions namely; beaches, heritage, wildlife, scenic beauty, mind and body wellness, festivals, sports and adventure and essence (Ranasinghe, 2015). The island, therefore, is named as the best-valued destination for holidays. From the time when Sri Lankan authorities paid attention to promoting tourism in the mid-1960s, it has become one of the major sources of foreign exchange earnings. Tourism has reached to 1,798,380 arrivals in 2015. India emerged as the leading producer of tourism to Sri Lanka, amounting 316,247 arrivals, accounting for 17.6 percent of the total traffic. China progressed to second place with rapid growth in tourist arrivals, while the UK moved down to a 3rd position in 2015, from second place in 2014. Employment generated in the tourism sector (both direct and indirect) increased by 6.5 percent to 319, 436 in 2015.

A few tourism development plans are carried out with proper strategies, but these development plans are not integrated with other considerations, such as the socio-cultural impact of tourism. National and regional authorities should consider this issue. Whatever the shortcomings, the development of tourism has been regarded as an essential factor for the economic development of Sri Lanka. Therefore, a study on the economic, social and environmental impact of tourism is significant, as these phenomena are interrelated. However, it is generally accepted that 'real' development cannot be achieved unless the strategies are sustainable and consistent with social values and institutions. This can be possible through the implementation of existing management plans and efforts to come up with comprehensive land use and an integrated management plan for the Eastern Province. This study will help to address this issue.

The tourism sector has been identified as a key sector propelling the country's economic growth (Ranasinghe & Deyshappriya, 2010). A significant improvement in Sri Lanka's tourism has been observed after the end of the ethnic conflict in 2009 (Rauf, 2014). After thirty years of war, the arrival of local and foreign tourists has significantly increased in the province (Ahamed & Jothi, 2011).

Sri Lanka has achieved many positive developments during the period 2005 to 2009, with policies implemented towards a new Sri Lanka. According to the Department of National Planning (2010), Sri Lanka is to be the emerging wonder of Asia. Sri Lanka is prioritizing tourism and has started taking several steps to strengthen this sector. Sri Lanka had forecast its tourist arrivals as 2.5 Million by the end of 2016. For this purpose, many flagship projects are being implemented in the tourism industry in Sri Lanka (Sooriyagoda, 2012). According to the Sri Lanka tourism development authority, the total number of international tourist arrivals to Sri Lanka during March 2019 was 2. 4 Million. In comparison to March last year, there was a growth of 4.7% when the arrivals were 2. 3 Million. Tourist arrivals to Sri Lanka during April 2019 was only 1.6 Million. In comparison to April last year, there was a decline of 7.5%when the arrivals were 1.8 Million (Monthly tourist arrivals report, 2019).

Tourism has two sides. On the one hand, it yields tremendous economic positive outcomes: it is one of the world's most significant sources of economic outcomes and employment. On the other hand, there are adverse socio and environmental effects. The quality of the environment is crucial for the tourism industry. However, tourism's relationship with the environment is complex. Tourism-related activities have many adverse environmental effects. Tourism-related activities such as construction roads and airports, tourism facilities, including resorts,

hotels, restaurants, shops, golf courses, and marinas have been linked to the negative effects. While the tourism industry is depending on environmental resources, tourism related activities may also it gradually.

In certain area ecotourism or green tourism which with the main objective to preserve the natural and cultural capital preservation. Those contribute to environmental preservation and improvement of local population life conditions. However, special attention was not given to the inherent solidarity and human dimensions of tourism. Tourism should ensure that the landscape flora, wild animals and any cultural characteristic of a region is admired, studied and appreciated. Some people in the tourism industry did not understand the significance of ecotourism and consider that it refers to building a hotel in the middle of nature, ignoring that this investment damages the local ecosystem. According to this view, ecotourism should primarily raise awareness of the beauty of nature but are not conscious that they contribute to the degradation of the natural environment, by using air conditioning installation or pools, etc. Many tourism projects are commenced with the aim of economic benefits, without considering the social purposes (respect for customs, traditions, social and family structures of the local population). Although tourism takes place in rural areas, it does not fully apply rural tourism.

Rural tourism refers to holidays spent in rural areas to respecting the strict criteria related to the behavior of tourist-consumers, such as consumption of agro-alimentary products from the host's household and participating in farm or household, etc. The appreciation of rural spaces, natural resources, cultural patrimony, rural constructions, village traditions, and earth products.

Further, tourism is not focused on the community, of involving local populations and developed for their benefit so that they build and manage the accommodation structures, as well as the local services offered to tourists. Local populations should have complete control over tourism-generated revenue, a great part of the revenue devoted to improving living conditions of the community, paying special attention to respecting nature and the local traditions. This form of tourism is often combined with production activities development, such as the transformation of agricultural products or handicraft workshops, whose products are sold primarily to tourists. Sometimes fair remuneration of local partners, through total transparency of the tourism products price mechanism is not given. This form of tourism engages the responsibility of all actors involved: host population, intermediaries and tourists, the responsibility is based on respect for the local customs and values, and their environment, as well as a certain equitable redistribution of the generated revenues.

Tourism is an activity that may contribute to attaining a high level of economic and social development, as evident in some countries in Southern Europe. Yet to achieve this, tourism development must be based on proper planning and be implemented so that the effects may not result in unpleasant consequences for people and the environment. Unless tourist development planners adopt a sustainable approach and reduce their reliance on concentrated tourism flows they risk incurring negative consequences leading to eventual rejection by the local population. This is the new challenge for tourism resources management, which should be able to allow solving the specific problems of financing the tourism sector, bearing in mind the growing competition among destinations in the international tourism market. They have to consider sustainability towards eco tourism, as well as competing in the market.

Therefore, the objective of this study is to identify the specific socio, economic and environmental impact of tourism in the eastern province of Sri Lanka. The reason for focusing on the Eastern province of Sri Lanka is, it is one of the nine provinces of Sri Lanka. The Eastern Province is about 15 percent of the total land area of the country. The province comprises of three districts namely Ampara, Batticaloa, and Trincomalee. The topography of the province is relatively flat in the coastal areas and undulating in the Western part of the Province. The landscape of the Province is varied, with paddy fields, forests, scrublands, wetlands and lagoons being predominant. The population of the province is about 1.5 million, which is about 6.7 percent of the total population

of Sri Lanka (Department of Census and Statistics, 2014). The Eastern Province is relatively less developed in comparison with most of the other provinces in the country. Development in the province has suffered as a result of the ethnic conflict which spanned for more than twenty years. The region is endowed with natural resources, such as forests, wetlands, lagoons, bays, and beaches.

Further, the contribution of the Eastern province to the national GDP is around 5.8 percent (Central Bank, 2015). The main contributors to the regional economy are agriculture, trade and tourism, transport and construction. These sectors were relatively more important to the economy, with a large percentage (about 80 percent) of the population dependent, either directly or indirectly, for their livelihood in these activities. Tourism is developing rapidly in the province. Direct and indirect employment generation and other economic benefits in financial terms are well recognized.

2. Review of Literature

Kumudika and Perera (2017) conducted a study on recent trends in tourist arrivals in Sri Lanka. According to them, as cited in Neto (2003) tourism is one of the largest and fastest-growing industries in the world. They quote the report of the World Tourism Organization (2014) and state that international tourism is set to hit a new record by the end of 2014 with over 1.1 billion international tourists in one single year. Moreover, according to the World Tourism Organization (2016), the number of international tourist arrivals (overnight visitors) in 2015 increased by 4.6 percent to reach a total of 1186 million worldwide, an increase of 52 million compared to the previous year. Kumudika and Perera (2017) state that in the case of Sri Lanka, many factors affect tourist arrivals. According to Ranasinghe (2015), "traditionally, Sri Lanka's diverse landscapes and rich cultural heritage present a wide range of tourism opportunities, from "sun and beach" holidays, wildlife excursions, and cultural tours". The attractive coastal areas like Tangalle, Hambantota, Pasikuda, Unawatuna, Arugam Bay and beautiful coral reefs at Hikkaduwa have attracted tourists.

A study conducted in Hikkaduwa by Ranasinghe (2014) states that the tourism industry must be carefully managed to avoid or minimize the negative impact of tourism in the socio-cultural life of tourist resorts, like Hikkaduwa. He further reiterates that tourism is one of the major foreign income sources in Sri Lanka. The social impact of tourism varies. Despite the shortcomings, the development of tourism has been regarded as a panacea for the economic malaise of Sri Lanka. Using robust data, the study explores the changes influenced by the development of tourism in terms of socio-cultural life in Hikkaduwa. The qualitative method is given priority in the study. He argues that tourism brings some positive, as well as negative benefits to the island. The environmental degradation, archaeological ruins, illegal businesses, black money fraud, theft, drug trafficking, prostitution, HIV threat, gambling, and rising crime rate are the social cost of international tourism. 'Child sex' is one of the major issues raised by tourism, and has a direct impact on the price level and the consumption behavior of the host population. He states that tourism has provided a variety of employment opportunities in different capacities in restaurants, guest houses, shops, and the transport sectors. Some are involved in their mini businesses, related to tourism. International tourism has a significant impact on the socio-cultural structure of the host country. Some of the educated middle-class, who are involved in the tourism industry in various capacities, such as managers, view that, even though they are not happy with the worst aspects of European culture, they accept tourism for its foreign exchange revenue. As Dhar (2006) argues, to the host, the impact of tourism is not always positive, although it is promoted as a major force in upgrading the standard of living, the values fostering international understanding and the preservation of the cultural heritage of the host population. In a previous study by Asoka Jayasena (1995) on the social impact of tourism in Dupathgama - a traditional village in Aluthgama

- a rapid transition from the traditional way of thinking, which ridicules earnings through unethical ways, to a profit-making commercial culture is revealed.

A different study on negative environmental impacts of tourism by Ratnayake (2015) conducted in the area of Unawatuna beach in Sri Lanka, states that any industry can cause both positive and negative impacts to the country. He stated that before tourism became an industry, Sri Lankan beaches were very famous all over the world. Both literary and archeological sources proved this phenomenon. Sri Lankan beaches were famous among foreigners since the colonial period. Ratnayake (2015) summarized the negative environmental impact of tourism in the Unawatuna beach area. Problems relating to waste products and marine water pollution. Hotels, guest houses, restaurants and other similar places that do not have a proper waste product drainage system evacuate their waste products to water sources, and pollute both land water and surface water. This problem is most acute in restaurants near the beach. Such places remove their waste products into the sea. Tourist activities related to the sea also pollute the freshwater environment. Water pollution is the main component of environmental pollution. There are many waste products dumped in coastal areas, for instance, used king coconuts and plastic bottles. This may occur as a result of carelessness on the part of tourists. A canal carries waste products mixed water, and negatively affects marine flora and fauna. Water pollution may also harm tourism, as polluted marine water will be a risk for tourism. This is harmful for a destination as the main tourist activity, for instance, in the Unawatuna coastal area is motorboat tours, for watching coral. However, motorboats are also causing marine pollution through the evacuation of oil, which is harmful the marine environment.

The negative impact on coastal flora and fauna is another critical area. The sea area surrounding Sri Lanka is rich with coral reefs. Most of the beautiful coral can be seen in Hikkaduwa and surrounding the areas of Pigeon Island, Pasikuda, Unawatuna, and Tincomalee. Around 68 types of corals can be identified in the marine environment of Sri Lanka and around 300 species live in these ecosystems. The Coast Conservation Department has launched a special program to conserve coral reefs. The main cause for the disturbance to the reefs is the activity of motorboats which are used in tourism. The natural growth of coral is disturbed by the broken parts of motor boats and solid colluviums due to high pressure. People use speedy glass-bottom boats to view coral. This is dangerous to rare fish species that live in coral reefs. Food menus exhibited in tourist hotels and restaurants are largely composed of seafood to appeal to tourists. Most hotels need a large amount of fish to cater to tourists which harms fish species. According to the Coastal Conservation Department information, tourism is the main threat to the resource of turtles. Due to the high population of tourists, heavy noises from beach hotels, beach festivals, strong light, and usage of shells of turtles to make fancy items are threats to the survival of turtles. Turtle conservation projects preserve turtles from these threats. Other than main environmental problems like water pollution, air pollution, and sound pollution, visual pollution is also a major problem. Tourist accommodations, which were constructed improperly is the main cause of visual pollution. Though the Coastal Conservation Department has removed some illegal constructions, some parts, such as broken parts of foundations can be seen in certain places in the coastal areas. This kind of constructions is harmful to the natural environment. These constructions are an "eyesore". The tables and chairs in restaurants in the coastal areas and armchairs on the beach destroy the natural beauty of the environment.

Another environmental problem in the Unawatuna coastal area is coastal erosion. The Coastal Conservation Department takes action to prevent coastal erosion. Negative environmental impacts are rapidly increasing at present and it is essential to remedy the situation. Management can be introduced as a policy planning procedure to monitor this phenomenon through suggestions for preventing and minimizing the negative impacts on the environment

Another study on Mangroves vanishes in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka by Fawzul Ameer (2017) states that a significant amount of mangroves have been destroyed due to tourism activities in the Eastern Province. Although

a variety of mangroves were present in the Eastern Province previously, many have been destroyed by human activities in the coastal area of the province.

A study by Ahamed and Jothi (2011) on the positive and negative impact of the tourism industry in the Eastern Province reveals several positive and negative impacts from the socio-economic and environmental points of view. This study stresses that the negative impact of tourism should be eliminated for the Eastern Province to enjoy the benefit of the sustainable tourism industry.

A study on perceptions of the socio-economic and cultural impact of tourism in Sri Lanka by Sadurdin (2011) states that the literature dealing with the socio-economic impact of tourism demonstrates concern about that impact in host countries whose per capita income and/or culture is very different from that of the foreign tourists. However, studies on the socio-cultural impact of tourism are scarce. To address this issue, data were collected from representatives of the Sri Lankan middle-class and from tourists, to understand their perceptions of the impact of international tourism in Sri Lanka. The results of the study indicate that tourism is perceived to create economic prosperity, to have little impact on culture and tradition, but to lead to some growth in prostitution, etc. He states that “by taking a planned, gradualist approach to tourism development, the Sri Lankan government has avoided the severe negative impact that tourism can have on a country's socio-cultural fabric. This containment was also attributed to a very rich history and tradition of the country, which prepared the inhabitants to deal with the inflow of tourists (p.1)”.

A different study by Mendis (1981) on the topic of the economic, social and cultural impact of tourism in Sri Lanka provides a brief history of tourism development in Sri Lanka and analyzes developments since the Ceylon Tourism Plan was drawn up in 1967. Aspects such as remoteness, seasonality and room occupancy rates are discussed. The economic impact of tourism is assessed, particularly in terms of foreign exchange earnings. Tourism and employment, GDP, government revenue, regional economic development, economic diversification, and dependence, as well as social and cultural impacts (positive and negative) are among the issues analyzed.

3. Methodology

Data for this research were collected from primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected by implementing a questionnaire, interviews, observation and group discussions. The questionnaire was developed by using the literature survey. The Questionnaire consisted of three sections. Section One includes the personal information of the respondents. Section two has 50 questions. The questions from 1 to 15 are related to the economic impact of tourism, questions 16 to 34 are related to the social impact of tourism and questions 35 to 50 are related to the environmental impact of tourism. These questions are based on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The respondents are required to rate their level of agreement with each item. Section three includes questions to verify other related aspects of the impact of tourism on economic, social and environmental areas in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka.

The questionnaires were distributed among people, who are living or working in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka. It was mainly distributed in the identified tourist areas, such as Pottuvil, Arugambay, Ampara Uhana, Batticaloa, Valaichchenei, Passikuda, Vaheri, Trincomalee, and Nilaveli, etc. A total of 2500 completed questionnaires were collected and analyzed.

Besides the questionnaire, semi-structured interviews with residents were also conducted. Interviews were recorded digitally and transcribed, while informal conversations and observations were compiled as field notes by the researchers. A total of around 75 persons were interviewed. The respondents are retired teachers, teachers, schools' principals, police officers, and navy personnel, and religious leaders, officers of the divisional secretariat,

accountants, and members of societies, university undergraduates and business people. We also interviewed three-wheeler drivers and other low-income groups, based on availability. The data from the interviews were interpreted qualitatively. Interviews with central and local government officials were also conducted informally. Secondary data sources include government reports and other relevant literature on tourism. Interviews were conducted by the authors and an experienced team of graduates, who have graduated from the South-Eastern University of Sri Lanka. The interviewers include all community people and were able to conduct interviews in Sinhala and Tamil.

We identified several limitations in the research methodology. It may be possible that respondents' opinions have been positively-biased and they are less inclined to express dissatisfaction with various aspects of tourism development in the Eastern Province. A high proportion of sample respondents were found to be either employed in or associated with the tourism industry. Another research shortcoming, due to an unintentional oversight, was that the interviewers did not mark the ethnic origin of the respondents. Consequently, it was impossible to do any detailed analyses of distinguishing attitudes between different ethnic groups. Hence, this study is representative of the sample population as a whole, and may not be representative of separate ethnic groups.

The adopted questionnaire was validated. Descriptive analysis and t-test were employed as statistical techniques in this study. Means and standard deviations are the descriptive statistics used in discussing the distribution of responses gathered in the research. The One-way ANOVA test and the Tukey pairwise comparisons were used to analyze the district difference on selected statements.

Economic Impact of Tourism

To ascertain the overall perception of respondents in the Eastern Province, the data were analyzed and presented in Table 1. Results related to the economic impact of tourism revealed that the majority of respondents agreed with the positive statements of the economic-related impact. Most of the economic impacts of tourism are favored by the respondents. The mean of all statements is above 3.5, except in the case of three items. Those are "Quality of life, in general, is increased due to tourism", "More areas should become more tourist destinations" and "Public places are kept in a better state due to tourism". These statements are agreed by less than 50 percent of the respondents and the mean is around 3.0. This indicates that respondents perceive the current level of tourism as having no significant impact on the quality of life, better standard of public places and increasing tourist destinations.

The positive impact of tourism includes more investment, an increase in the standard of living, an increase in income, creation of job opportunities, improved appearance of the city and economic development. Negative feelings about tourism only concern the price increase in products and property. Thus, it can be concluded that respondents in all three districts of the Eastern Province have the same perception about the economic impact of tourism. Respondents do not oppose to tourism at its current level and even favor its expansion.

Table 1: The Economic Impact of Tourism in the Eastern Province

No	Questions	Percentage					Mean	Standard Deviation
		SA5	A 4	N 3	DA2	SDA1		
1	Tourism leads to more investment	32.9	51.2	10.2	3.7	2.0	4.093	0.868
2	Tourism increases the standard of living	13.4	48.4	24.0	9.0	5.3	3.556	1.007
3	Income increases due to tourism	31	46.3	13.4	6.5	2.8	3.959	0.980

4	Job opportunities are created	27.4	48.2	14.7	3.7	6.1	3.869	1.052
5	Prices of products are high in the area due to tourism	23.6	40	23.6	8.0	5.1	3.688	1.075
6	Tourism leads to the economic development of the area	25.0	49.6	15.4	5.8	4.2	3.854	0.997
7	Public places are kept in a better state due to tourism	14.2	31.0	24.7	18.0	12.1	3.172	1.233
8	Quality of life, in general, is increased due to tourism	9.2	42.3	33.5	11.3	3.8	3.412	0.939
9	Tourism improves the appearance of the city	25.6	41.2	21.0	8.0	4.2	3.761	1.054
10	More areas should become tourist destinations	13.2	38.0	29.3	13.2	6.6	3.384	1.076
11	Tourism increases recreational opportunities	14.6	43.8	25.0	10.0	6.67	3.496	1.071
12	The area should try to attract more tourists	17.3	44.9	19.8	11.1	7.0	3.543	1.114
13	Tourism provides good jobs for residents	18.6	52.5	18.0	7.0	3.7	3.758	0.962
14	Tourism should play a vital role in the future	20.0	46.5	18.0	10.2	5.3	3.657	1.073
15	Tourism increases property prices in an unfair manner	27.2	29.7	28.9	10.9	3.3	3.667	1.089

Source: Survey data

The Social Impact of Tourism

Table 2 presents respondents' rating on the social impact of tourism with a mean and standard deviation of each statement for the Eastern Province. The table shows the positive, as well as the negative social impact of tourism. In the case of social impact, several negative effects were recognized. The majority of respondents believe that the younger generation is affected by the bad habits of tourists and respondents also indicate that tourism is the cause of changes in the traditional culture of the area.

In the case of the other statements, the mean of around 3.0 may indicate that respondents perceive the current level of tourism as having no significant social impact of tourism in the Eastern Province. Therefore, it could be concluded that almost all respondents in the Eastern Province have the same perception about the social impact of tourism.

Table 2: The Social Impact of Tourism in the Eastern Province

No	Questions	Percentage					Mean	Standard Deviation
		SA5	A 4	N 3	DA2	SDA1		
16	Tourism leads to undesirable effects in the lives of people living in the area	18.8	34.6	21.8	16.2	8.6	3.388	1.207
17	The younger generation is affected by the bad habit of tourists	28.8	35.2	19.9	5.1	11.0	3.656	1.253
18	Tourism is the cause of changes in the traditional culture of the area	24.2	40.0	18.3	10.4	7.0	3.637	1.163

19	Tourism leads to the use of alcohol among residents	18.9	32.5	24.1	18.9	5.5	3.405	1.155
20	Tourism leads to use of drugs among residents	18.4	28.9	26.8	16.3	9.6	3.301	1.220
21	Tourism increases the amount of crime	10.6	25.7	35.0	18.6	10.1	3.080	1.126
22	Tourism increases sex tourism	14.8	33.5	27.5	17.4	6.8	3.322	1.129
23	The area is particularly vulnerable to international trafficking	7.3	25.2	31.2	16.7	19.7	2.837	1.214
24	Local communities became displaced from their lands due to tourism	9.9	30.6	21.9	25.9	11.6	3.012	1.197
25	Local communities are deprived of their livelihood	8.1	27.5	33.1	19.9	11.4	3.008	1.123
26	Hotel construction on the waterfront causes the withdrawal of fishing villages	16.4	31.5	28.2	14.7	9.2	3.310	1.181
27	Tourism causes a loss of traditional lifestyle	20.0	31.3	23.3	19.2	6.3	3.395	1.184
28	Tourism causes cultural clashes	18.4	36.8	23.9	14.5	6.4	3.461	1.138
29	Residents are not considered in decision-making related to the development of tourism	18.7	35.7	26.8	11.1	7.2	3.478	1.135
30	The different lifestyles and economic inequality between tourists and local people causes changes in the behavior of the locals	6.3	43.2	27.1	12.3	11.0	3.216	1.099
31	Locals also try to copy tourists and live in the same way	9.5	40.1	28.9	14.2	7.3	3.301	1.062
32	Many children are engaged in small business activities related to hotels and restaurants	8.6	43.1	23.9	15.8	8.6	3.273	1.097
33	Tourism has led child labor in the area	9.7	34.5	25.2	20.2	10.5	3.126	1.158
34	Children are more vulnerable to being subject to sexual exploitation	10.5	39.1	25.6	13.0	11.8	3.235	1.167

Source: Survey data

The Environmental Impact of Tourism

Table 3 shows the environmental impact of tourism in the Eastern Province. At the province level, respondents welcome tourists to the province. All other statements reflect the negative impact of tourism. The mean value of these statements is around 3.0, which may indicate that residents perceive the current level of tourism as having no significant impact on the environment of the Eastern Province. In general, the environment is not affected due to tourism in the Eastern Province.

Table 3: The Environmental Impact of Tourism in the Eastern Province

No	Questions	Percentage					Mean	Standard Deviation
		SA5	A4	N3	DA2	SDA1		
35	Natural environment is destroyed	16.9	33.5	26.5	13.6	9.5	3.3471	1.1892
36	I welcome tourists to this area	15.4	39.6	26.7	12.0	6.3	3.4583	1.0854

37	Residents learn courtesy and hospitality towards strangers	13.7	39.9	29.6	9.0	7.7	3.4292	1.0810
38	Local government should restrict tourism	12.0	25.0	29.7	18.5	14.7	3.0129	1.2291
39	Local government should control tourism	12.9	35.5	25.5	19.1	6.9	3.2857	1.1251
40	Tourism harm the environment	11.6	27.0	34.8	17.2	9.0	3.1509	1.1199
41	Tourism leads to more litter on the streets	12.1	35.3	27.6	18.5	6.5	3.2802	1.0986
42	Tourism increases traffic in the city	12.3	29.7	28.4	18.2	11.4	3.1314	1.1903
43	Tourism does not bring any benefit to the community	6.8	24.8	22.7	33.8	11.9	2.8077	1.1429
44	Tourism causes heavy noises from beach hotels	15.6	27.9	30.4	19.4	6.8	3.2616	1.1420
45	Tourist accommodation which was constructed improperly is the main cause of visual pollution	15.3	29.8	33.6	14.5	6.8	3.3234	1.1083
46	Tourism causes coastal erosion	10.2	32.6	30.5	19.5	7.2	3.1907	1.0885
47	Environmental resources are overused by tourism	13.8	39.1	25.3	16.7	5.2	3.3966	1.0796
48	Motorboats used for watching coral is also a reason for marine pollution	15.4	34.6	28.3	15.0	6.7	3.3708	1.1166
49	Oil evacuated from boats is harmful to the marine environment	18.3	32.9	23.8	17.0	7.9	3.3667	1.1923
50	Tourist activities related to the sea also pollutes the water environment	18.8	34.6	23.3	16.7	6.7	3.4208	1.1652

Source: Survey data

General Responses of Residents in the Eastern Province

In Part III of the questionnaire, several questions were asked about the perception of residents, hotels owners, tourist, and the relevant officers living in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka. The perception of respondents is discussed as follows. Figure 1 shows the tourist arrival periods. It can be observed from the figure that during April-September a high number of tourists visit the eastern part of Sri Lanka.

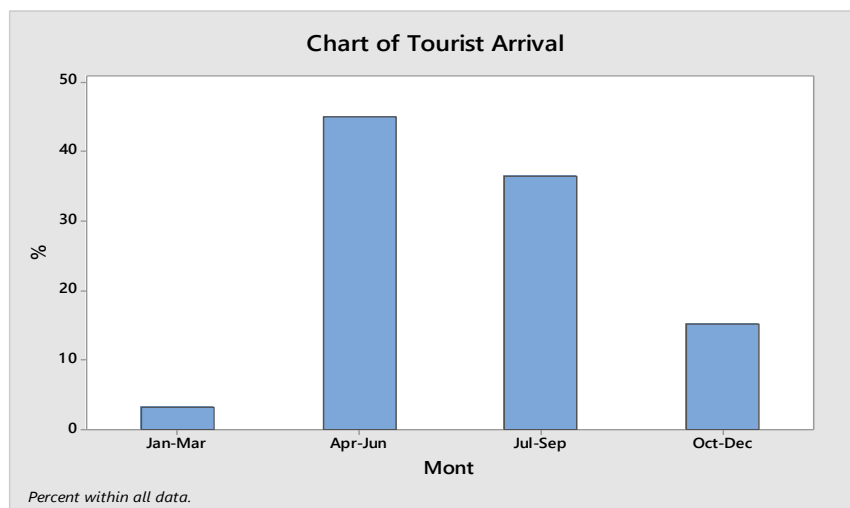


Figure 1: Distribution of Tourist Arrival to the Eastern Province during the Year (Quarterly)

Source: Survey Data

When the respondents were asked about the purpose of visit to Sri Lanka, and especially to the Eastern province, many respondents said that tourists generally visit the eastern part of Sri Lanka to experience the sea and sun and to enjoy nature. When they were asked about the preference for visiting purposes, 34 percent of tourists travel only for sea baths. Figure 2 shows the preference of tourists to the Eastern Province.

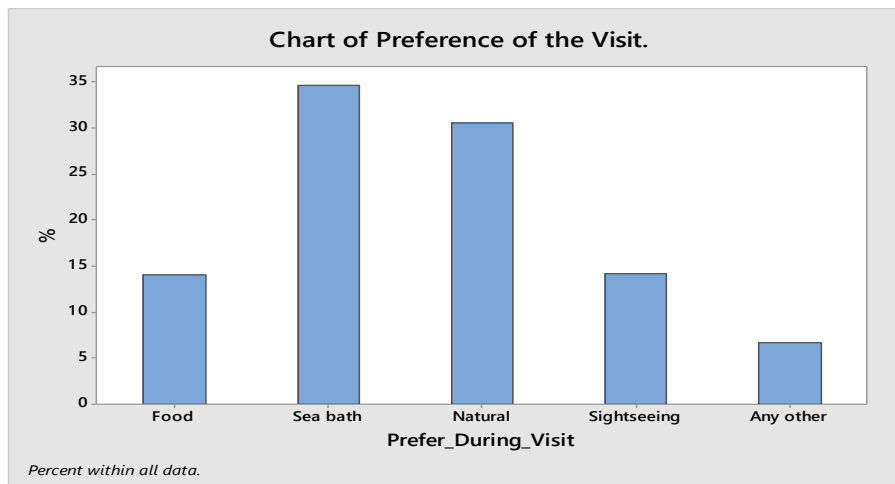


Figure 2: Distribution of Tourist Arrivals Based on the purpose

Source: Survey Data

When the respondents were asked about the job opportunities that had arisen due to tourist arrivals in this area, 57 percent stated "yes". When they were asked to choose their preferred jobs within the tourist industry, 54 percent of respondents chose hotels jobs, 25 percent chose a tourist guide.

Figure 3 shows the job opportunities available due to tourism.

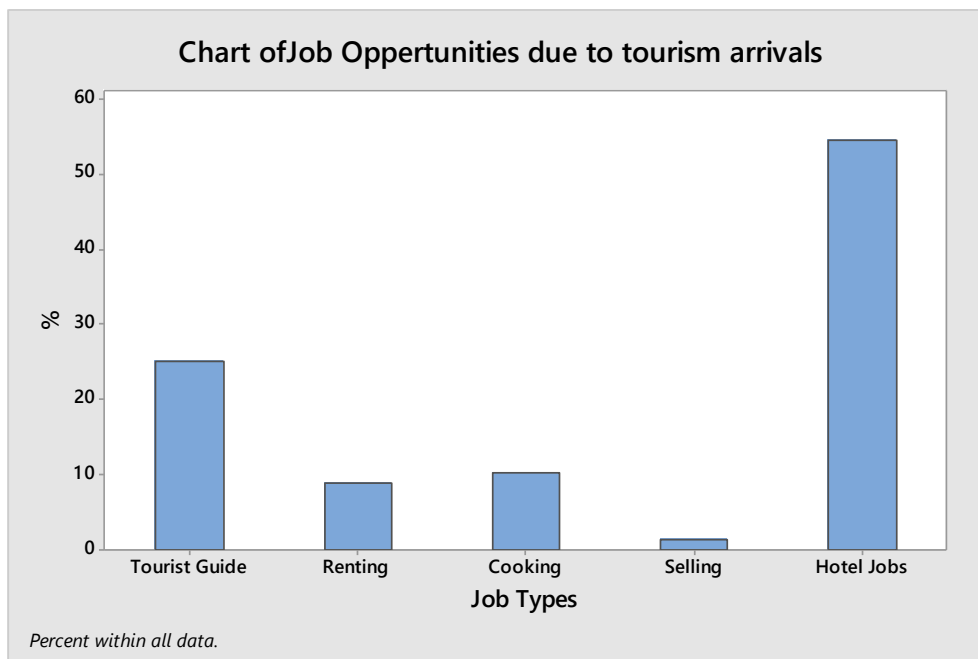


Figure 3: Distribution of Job Opportunities due to Tourist Arrivals based on Types of jobs

Source: Survey Data

Is there a Difference between Tourists and Local People?

When the respondents were asked, "Do you think that tourists visiting your area are different from people in your locality?" 70 percent of respondents stated that international tourists are very different from local people.

Further, to know the relationship between local people and tourists, respondents were asked that "What kind of social relationships do you have with tourists". 50 percent of respondents indicates that they have some contact with tourists and 40 percent of respondents claim that they have no contact with tourists. The district-wise differences, as presented in Table 4, reveal different views. In Trincomalee, people have some contact with tourists, compared to the other two districts.

Table 4: Contact with Tourists

Perceptions	Percentage			
	Ampara	Batticaloa	Trincomalee	Province
Have no contact with Tourists	46.62	45.11	40.82	55.10
Have some contact with Tourists	7.52		23.53	40.34
Have constant contact with Tourists			58.82	17.65
				9.01

Volume of Tourists

Respondents were also asked about the volume of tourists who visit the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka. Table 5 captures the feelings of respondents regarding the volume of tourists in terms of percentage. Most respondents feel that the volume of tourists should be increased. However, respondents from Batticaloa district are not in favor of increasing the number of tourists. In contrast, respondents in the Ampara district welcome tourists. Further, respondents from Batticaloa feel that the volume of tourists should be decreased. Overall, there is a feeling that the volume of tourists should be increased. When there is an increase in the volume of tourists, there are benefits for the residents.

Table 5: How Do You Feel About the Volume of Tourists Visiting?

Perceptions	Percentage			
	Ampara	Batticaloa	Trincomalee	Province
a) Should Significantly Decrease	5.47	20.00	11.76	10.04
b) Should Decrease Somewhat	11.72	22.00	15.69	14.85
c) Not Change	14.84	30.00	54.90	27.07
d) Should Increase Somewhat	41.41	14.00	13.73	29.26
e) Should Significantly Increase	25.78	14.00	3.92	18.34

Source: Survey Data

Overall Opinion of the Tourism Industry

Respondents were questioned on their overall opinion of tourism in the Eastern Province. A summary of the results is presented in Table 6. Forty- seven percent of them favor or strongly favor it. Around 25 percent of respondents oppose tourism in the Eastern Province. 13 percent of the respondents indicate that they strongly oppose tourism. Some Muslims are not happy with western tourists, due to the mismatch of culture and behavior.

Table 6: What is Your Overall Opinion of the Tourism Industry?

Perceptions	Percentage			
	Ampara	Batticaloa	Trincomalee	Province
a) Strongly Oppose It	13.28	2.00 20.00	1.96	8.30
b) Oppose Somewhat	14.84	30.00	23.53	17.90
c) Neither Oppose nor Favor It	23.44	36.00	31.37	26.64
d) Favor It	35.94	12.00	37.25	36.24
e) Strongly Favor It	12.50		5.88	10.92

Source: Survey Data

Relationship between Overall Opinion and Sex

The relationship between overall opinion and demographic characteristics of respondents were analyzed using Chi-Square tests. Table 7 shows the result of the association between opinion and sex and there is no association between sex and overall opinion.

Table 7: Association between Overall Opinion and Sex

Overall opinion	Sex	
	Female	Male
a) Strongly Oppose It	47.4	52.6
b) Oppose Somewhat	46.3	53.6
c) Neither Oppose nor Favor It	29.5	70.5
d) Favor It	28.4	71.6
e) Strongly Favor It	28.0	72.0
Pearson Chi-Square	6.400 (0.171)	
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square	6.218(0.183)	

Source: Survey Data

P-value is given within brackets

Relationship between Overall Opinion and Marital Status

Table 8 is the result of the association between overall opinion and marital status and there is no association between marital status and overall opinion.

Table 8: Association between Overall Opinion and Marital

Overall opinion	Marital	
	Married	Unmarried
a) Strongly Oppose It	42.11	57.89
b) Oppose Somewhat	51.22	48.78
c) Neither Oppose nor Favor It	55.00	45.00
d) Favor It	57.50	42.50
e) Strongly Favor It	28.00	72.00
Pearson Chi-Square	7.631(0.106)	

Likelihood Ratio Chi -Square	7.806 (0.099)
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Source: Survey Data

P-value is given within brackets

Relationship between Overall Opinion and Extra Income

Table 9 shows the results of the association between overall opinion and extra income and there is no association between extra income and overall opinion.

Table 9: Association between Overall Opinion and Extra Income

Overall opinion	Extra Income	
	No	Yes
a) Strongly Oppose It	84.21	15.79
b) Oppose Somewhat	82.50	17.50
c) Neither Oppose nor Favor It	81.67	18.33
d) Favor It	91.36	8.64
e) Strongly Favor It	81.82	18.18
Pearson Chi-Square	3.526 (0.474)	
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square	3.752 (0.441)	

Source: Survey Data

P-value is given within brackets

Table 10 shows the association between overall opinion and districts, and there is no association between the districts and overall opinion. The general opinion about tourism in the Eastern Province is the same, regardless of districts.

Table 10: Association between Overall Opinion and Districts

Overall opinion	Districts		
	Ampara	Batticaloa	Trincomalee
a) Strongly Oppose It	89.47	5.26	5.26
b) Oppose Somewhat	46.34	24.39	29.27
c) Neither Oppose nor Favor It	49.18	24.59	26.23
d) Favor It	55.42	21.69	22.89
e) Strongly Favor It	64.00	24.00	12.00
Pearson Chi-Square	13.067(0.110)		
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square	14.813(0.063)		

Source: Survey Data

P-value is given within brackets

Relationship between Overall Opinion and Age

Table 11 shows the association between overall opinion and the age of the respondents and there is no association between age and overall opinion. The general opinion about tourism in the Eastern Province is the same, regardless of age.

Table 11: Association between Overall Opinion and Age

Overall opinion	Age			
	18-25	26-40	41-50	51-65
a) Strongly Oppose It	52.63	42.11	5.26	0.00
b) Oppose Somewhat	41.46	39.02	7.32	12.20
c) Neither Oppose nor Favor It	30.00	53.33	13.33	3.33
d) Favor It	40.74	35.80	16.05	7.41
e) Strongly Favor It	60.00	32.00	0.00	8.00
Pearson Chi Square	18.132(0.112)			
Likelihood Ratio Chi Square	21.715(0.041)			

Source: Survey Data

P-value is given within brackets

Relationship between Overall Opinion and Employment

Table 12 presents the association between overall opinion and employment of respondents, and there is an association between employment and overall opinion. Those who are employed in the government sector are opposed to tourism, while entrepreneurs are in favor of tourism. At the same time, those who work in the tourism sector are also in favor of tourism.

Table 12: Association between Overall Opinion and Employment

Overall opinion	Employment			
	Entrepreneur	Government	Private	Tourist
a) Strongly Oppose It	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00
b) Oppose Somewhat	26.47	55.06	17.65	0.82
c) Neither Oppose nor Favor It	15.38	63.46	15.38	5.77
d) Favor It	49.25	8.96	5.97	35.82
e) Strongly Favor It	30.00	10.00	25.00	35.00
Pearson Chi-Square	23.100(0.027)			
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square	25.526(0.013)			

Source: Survey Data

P-value is given within brackets

4. Findings and Conclusions

Findings reveal that there is a perception of the positive economic impact of tourism, but there is also a recognition of the negative social impact of tourism in the Eastern Province. At the same time, there is no significant perception of the environmental impact of tourism. Also, residents feel that tourism has not yet created enough economic benefits for local people, but they agreed that tourism has provided job opportunities and can help to trigger the economy in the region. They have high hopes and a positive outlook on developing tourism in the tourist areas. Some residents have concerns about undesirable effects or changes which tourism may cause on their culture. Further, crowded public places and noise arises in the midnight were found to be the negative aspects of these tourism impacts.

Besides, tourism has not yet created enough economic benefits for local people, although it has provided job opportunities and helped the economy in the Eastern Province. Further, it was identified that the province possesses resources that can be explored for the development of the tourist industry. However, these resources

are not optimally utilized. Comparatively, if these resources are available in the western part of Sri Lanka, it would have been optimally utilized with a proper plan.

Impacts of tourism in the Eastern Province are both negative and positive, direct and indirect, long term and short term, and have social, economic or environmental consequences. There are some direct impacts that are the first change of what has social value and also have indirect impacts that are resulting from the first impacts. Long term impacts are related to the day to day operations of the development including such processes as waste disposal and water discharge. Short term impacts are associated with the actual construction and include vegetation removal, increased runoff, or noise and dust pollution. It is also observed that some impacts are cumulative or immediate. Cumulative impacts were the consequences of the net impacts of different uses on the same resource. Although a single-use may not cause significant problems alone, it can have severe consequences in conjunction with other uses. To plan for cumulative impacts, it is important to understand what uses are being made of the resource at present as well as what additional uses, if any, the resource can sustain. Specific plans and actions can increase tourism's benefits or decrease the gravity of a negative impact.

Based on this study it is possible to make many recommendations. According to our interview, most of the business respondents say that locals get 99% of the outcome are a benefit but only 1% of the outcome is harmful to the people. This is highly emphasized by hotel owners. However, villagers were in different opinions. In general, they said that tourism brings around 70% benefit whereas 30% harmful to the village and villagers. However, considering the most benefit of the tourism industry and the natural resources available in the Eastern Province we should identify how we can eliminate the negative impacts of tourism and reach sustainable tourism.

Further, in terms of cultural negative impact, there should be a mechanism. Both the host community and tourist should educate about the cultures of each other. Furthermore, develop knowledge about the culture and values of the host community is the most appropriate approach to safeguard the environment and culture of the destination. Especially the young people who are currently engaged in tourism must educate about values in Sri Lankan culture. It is possible to issue a leaflet through hotels to tourists to educate the culture of the village where the hotels are located. This should be properly drafted strategically without leading to an adverse effect on tourists. That would be helpful to improve respect about each other and it may minimize the cultural negative impacts caused through tourism. These attempts would reduce misbehaviors such as prostitution, homosexuality, and child abuse and drug addiction. Similarly, continuous scanning and monitoring and ideally addressing community attitudes and socio-cultural issues should be an ongoing part of any tourism activities. If the management of tourism identifies the issues related to the culture they can do proactive work to minimize the negative impacts.

We also should give a general idea or a taste of our culture to tourists, but not an overdose. It is important to be careful in selecting the items of our culture, religions, historic places, herbal medicine, traditional food, music, and dancing. At the same time, we should be able to appreciate the different cultures from which the tourists come, as sometimes a lack of understanding of the other cultures results in conflicts. We should develop a positive attitude towards tourism.

On the other hand, social harmony is important for sustainable development activities. The fact that there exists a diverse community within the Eastern Province, necessitates that high priority is given to achieving social harmony if the development process is to proceed forward and the stated objectives attained. Also one may consider socio-cultural diversity as a strength rather than a weakness, as such diversity can be advantageous when implementing a large scale development effort, provided that the social program can be managed effectively. The strengths of each community, cultural or social group should be harnessed for development and the establishment of a stable human settlement. A concerted effort must be made to reduce existing social tensions and minimize

further disharmony, through the development efforts identified under the plan. Villagers are under the tension of cultural issues. For instance, during the initial stage of this research replying to a question related to the cultural issue, a village respondent states that "The beauty of the Arugam Bay lead to the destruction of the Arugam Bay itself". It is important that the development plan, give sufficient consideration to social issues in the province and facilitate the resolution of these issues to minimize further tensions and move the development effort forward.

Another meaningful approach for better control negatives of tourism is changing the attitudes of society. Although Sri Lankans are practiced to think white skin is rich and they motivated to make foreigners happy to make some money. This attitude should change for minimizing the negative impacts such as sexual misbehaviors and beggars. More government involvement, tourist education, enhance the local awareness could be the solutions for overcoming those sensitive issues. Tourism development must be carefully managed to avoid or minimize the negative impact of tourism in the socio-cultural life of people in the eastern province.

Unless tourism development management play under these conditions a new role, of sustainable tourism development without reaching a too high concentration of tourism flows and the unpleasant effects of this concentration, the situation may cause eventually rejection of tourism by the local population. This is the new challenge for tourism resources management which should be able to allow solving the specific problems of financing the tourism sector, bearing in mind the growing competition among destinations, on the international tourism market.

When considering the economic impacts of tourism, respondents believed that tourism businesses provide low-paying jobs at minimum wage or less for residents. Also, these kinds of jobs are seasonal. This caused to under-employment or unemployment during off-seasons. It was also observed that laborers were imported from other countries or from metropolitan regions of the West for some jobs which require special skills or expertise. Sometimes this expertise cannot be found locally. This suggests that local people are not optimally benefitted from tourist activities. People in the local have to be trained for all positions available in the tourism industry. For this purpose, short term courses on the tourism industry and skills can be offered by the higher educational institutions in the Eastern Province. Further, the government authorities can impose some restrictions through rules and regulations such as a certain percentage of employment opportunities at all levels should be given to the local people as a restriction when the license is issued at the startup of the tourist business.

Findings also suggested that due to the high demand for goods, services, land, and housing have had increased prices that in turn increased the cost of living. Business people who run tourism businesses have had used land available in the coastal part. At the same time business owners from other countries. Further, respondents of the view that the majority of the profits are sent to foreign countries as owners of tourist hotels are from other countries.

It is also observed that there is a user conflict in the coastal part of Eastern Province. As fishing is one of the important economic sources of the people in the Eastern Province and their livelihood are dependent on fishing. Therefore, enough consideration should be given to them. For example, there was a huge conflict between fishers and tourist business owners in Pottuvil. This is the burning issue in the coastal area in the Eastern Province such as Pottuvil and Trincomalee. There are many avenues by which development can reduce environmental quality. Improper waste-water discharge, removal of natural vegetation, and placement of permanent structures too close to the beach are a few examples.

Although Eastern Province has a lot of natural beauty to attract tourists but currently suffers from poor infrastructure facilities. To ensure the rapid growth of tourism in the Eastern Province in the future, it is very

important. For instance, many places in the Trincomalee district are developed with roads. However, telecommunication facilities and a good hospital service close to tourist places are not available in many places. In certain area roads also should be improved. Example, the road towards Kumana Park.

Further, careful maintenance and enhancement of the coastal system will lead to sustainable tourism in the Eastern Province. When we go on the field visit to the coastal area in the Eastern Province it was observed that in some places are polluted with the garbage of wastes used by visitors. As the coastal ecosystems common to eastern coasts of Sri Lanka their linkages and proper maintenance must be considered in planning for development. Natural beach erosion processes and sand transport lead to the importance of maintaining natural beach vegetation. Marine and freshwater quality should be maintained by coastal facilities and their waste treatment process. Aesthetically pleasing coastal features such as coral reefs, vegetation are attracted by tourists. Therefore, clean beaches and water are necessary. Because of this polluted beach and water, it may disturb the tourists and may lead to a withdrawal of arrivals. Although a clean environment is maintained to some extent in the province more concentration should be paid to this aspect as the success of any coastal tourism effort is dependent upon maintaining a healthy environment. Therefore, tourist business owners should be more educated about the further understanding of how the coastal zone is affected by development and is necessary.

The successful development and operation of tourism are also determined by the international, national, provincial and local networking. Networking and association enable tourism in the district to achieve synergy in tourism development and promotion.

It is obvious that international tourism brings good and bad to the Island. Whatever the shortcoming of it, the development of tourism has been regarded as an important factor for the economy of Sri Lanka. It provides investment, employment. Tourist activities improve land use. It changes the economic structure and ultimately it changes whole social life.

Another important issue is there is no proper mechanism available to get the information about the number of arrivals, from which country and the reason for the visit. For this purpose, we would recommend opening a check desk at the police station of each tourist destinations. Tourists should be informed at their arrival at the airport regarding the necessities of this registration. This procedure should be done island wide may be by the tourism development authority. This mechanism may lead to any future policymakers or researchers to access information for regarding the tourist arrivals. This may also lead to minimizing any unusual activities such as robbery and theft. Regulatory authorities can also make instructions to hotel owners to provide weekly information about the tourist arrivals to their hotels.

During the study, it is also found that small business people close to tourist destinations are suffering from a shortage of fund for investment. For instance, small businesses operating around Hot water spring in Maha Oya and Hot water spring in Kanniya. Therefore, it is recommended to help these small businesses by offering microfinance facilities with special concessions. These recommendations can be done by the government with the collaboration of INGOs.

It is also recommended to develop a marketing strategy that may increase the positive image of Sri Lanka as the best tourist destination with its unique products. Increasing accessibility to Sri Lanka for existing and potential tourist markets through development of air connectivity, developing goods and services to meet the increasing needs of the tourism industry, and thus optimize the economic benefit of tourism development to Sri Lanka, improvement of human resources development to meet the existing and future needs of a quality tourist destination, modification of the organization of tourism activities in order to bring about related improvements in the private sector, increasing coordination between tourism and interrelated sectors, and introducing

streamlining to facilitate the development of the tourism sector, emphasize the environmental, social and cultural aspects to ensure that development of the tourism sector is sustainable, that it meets the needs of the local population as well as international and domestic tourists, and that the future potential is protected and enhanced, addressing the negative impacts of tourism industry on Sri Lankan culture, providing awareness to the local community about the sexual risks that are usually associated with tourism are highly recommended.

We should develop a positive attitude towards tourism. Community: Our communities, villagers near hotels, employees of tourist establishments should be educated about the benefits of tourism as well as the different cultures of tourists. Without the support of the employers, the employees and the local community, it will be difficult to ensure satisfying the needs of tourists in keeping with the expected standards. Merely planning alone is not enough. However, proper implementation and management is very important. At the same time, prompt attention to any unexpected contingencies issue will also lead to sustainable tourism.

From a theoretical point of view, the findings of this study will add new knowledge to the existing literature. The findings will also be helpful for the industry for balanced planning and implementation of their activities towards meeting the long-term needs of the socio-environmental demand. Further, findings will also be helpful for policymakers and authorities for planning in the future. In general, broader objectives of this study is to promote the tourism industry as a major contributor to the country's economy, to achieve balanced regional development, to decrease the regional disparity and to focus on the potential of the region, to maximize economic gain through sustainable development while maintaining cultural heritage.

5. Area for Future research

As this study was carried out only in the eastern province it is advice able to continue this study to the whole island of Sri Lanka. Further, this study was carried out for only a few months and it studied the attitudes of respondents in the area. Based on this research it is possible for longitudinal and comparative research to be conducted in the eastern province and other provinces which will help to provide stronger understanding of planning and decision making. Further, this study can also be done in a better way by eliminating the limitations of this study. Then it would be the more reliable and valid measurement. Besides this research has identified a concern with the level of local involvement in the tourism planning decision-making process.

To get true reflections of attitudes of respondents and future development of tourism research can be carried out focusing the next social impact research phase integrating the strategic objectives and actions of tourism officers with the attitudes of the local community toward these officially-stated objectives and actions. Therefore, future research should work by linking the attitudes of the residents with the strategies of policymakers. This may provide a basis for developing in a better way depending on the real needs of the residents.

The Eastern Provincial Council has developed the vision for the tourism industry for the Eastern Province as "most preferred destination for leisure and pleasure". The mission for the industry as specified by the provincial council is "Providing tourism-related infrastructure and services collaboratively with relevant stakeholders emphasizing the private sector participation to attract domestic and international tourists seeking historical, cultural, scenic and religious admiration whilst improving business opportunities for the community". Above all the vision for the Eastern Province in the Eastern Province by 2030, will be a vibrant sun-rise region with a sound regional economy with enhanced income levels and a socially harmonious human settlement structure while maintaining the uniqueness of the province, in terms of its natural landscape, its history, its culture, and its bio-diversity". Unless the issue of negative impact on the environment, socio-cultural impact of tourism are addressed the vision for the Eastern Province cannot be achieved.

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