

## **Study on Tourism Industry and Infrastructure Development in the Post-war Peace-Building Initiatives in Ampara District**

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**ABSTRACT.** In a post-war country, tourism has the potential to not only contribute to economic growth and physical reconstruction, but also to sustainable development, affirmative action and the protection of vulnerable groups to promote their livelihood. Although, Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) frightened the Government of Sri Lanka with their demand for a separate home land in the Northern and Eastern Sri Lanka, they were militarily defeated in the east of the country in July 2007. The Eastern Province comprised of Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Ampara Districts (Eastern Revival: <http://www.neweast.lk/>). This study covers the Ampara district which is the Southern Part of the Eastern Province. This is one of the attractive places for tourism in the Island. The tourism industry of the region has been greatly affected by the civil war and also by the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami Disaster. These tragic disasters contributed to insecurity, and, the loss of natural as well as man-made resources such as infrastructure, disruption of service and loss of livelihood. However, the perception of the insecurity since the civil war has been a strong deterrent for local and foreign tourists. Nevertheless, Total tourist arrivals to Sri Lanka were 494,000 and it brought Rs.42, 571mn to this sector in 2007. This is 1.9 percent to the GDP and 3.19 percent to the service sector in the same year. This study is an attempt to analyze how tourism industry fosters the ongoing post-war peace-building process in the region and to identify how and to what extent tourism activities and improvement of infrastructure facilities contribute in the socio-economic foundation of the district in the basis of peace-building. This is a descriptive analysis with the use of primary and secondary data sources. Primary data collected from hotel and restaurant owners, public in Potuvil, Arugambay and other parts of the district. Secondary data is collected from Divisional Secretaries, planning division of district secretariat, and District Secretariat Office (Kacheri), Ampara. The Finding shows that the arrival of local and foreign tourists have significantly increased in this district. This situation also leads to develop infrastructure such as road, hotel and other facilities. According to the findings, the tourism development of this district paves the way to the peace building and development not only in this district but also in the Island.

**Key words:** Peace building, Tourism development, Ethnic conflict

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