

## **Stepping Boom to Doom Tourism? A Special Focus on Elephant Seeing in Sri Lanka**

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Doom Tourism indicates a significant role in an emerging travel trend which explains visiting of vulnerable places and features before they disappear or are essential and irrevocably changed by tourists. Elephants, the symbolic creature of culture and nature of Sri Lanka are playing a major role of Sri Lanka's natural asset portfolio. Therefore, elephants are identified as an icon of booming of Sri Lankan tourism with elephant seeing, elephant safari, elephant ride, and using for foreign weddings etc., Elephant' destinations have been economically benefitted through the tourism but similarly and gradually threatened by human activities. Considering this doubtful background, this study aims to identify the problems associated with elephant seeing and whether elephant seeing of Sri Lankan tourism moving to Doom Tourism in the future. Dambulla, Habarana and Minneriya were selected as research field to the study. Primary data was collected from a sample of 85 tourists distributing a self-administered questionnaire and from 25 tourism stakeholders around the area through interviews. The secondary data was collected from books, magazines, newspapers and government offices. A mixed methodology was employed to analyze the collected data while importing them to the Statistical Package for the Social science (SPSS). The results show that elephants are in a severe risk due to killing for commercialization, dumping in forests and overloaded jeep safaris etc. and local guests emphasized that existing elephants in Sri Lanka are visited by them as they observed that elephants are threatened by humans. Further, both local and foreign tourists suggested to engage in Doom Tourism as Elephants in Sri Lanka is the image of Asian Elephants. Moreover, it is recommended that elephant seeing should be a form of responsible tourism in Sri Lankan Tourism Industry.

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