

Economic Impact of Tourism at Knuckles Forest Reserve; A Case Study in Atanwala Village

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The Knuckles forest reserve has a favourable condition for nature-based tourism. Knuckles forest reserve can be accessed through three main entrances and 'Atanwala' entrance being the uprising entrance. Therefore, Atanwala entrance and Atanwala village were selected as the study area for this research. Also, the number of researches carried out in these areas is negligible. Hence this study was designed to investigate the economic impact of tourism at Knuckles forest reserve considering the case of Atanwala village. This study was mainly focussed on the economic impact of households who lives in Atanwala village and also to identify the community perception towards tourism, the current situation of tourism, and thereby to identify strategies for tourism development in Atanwala-Knuckles forest area. A judgemental sampling technique was used and dopting a mixed-method data were collected distributing questionnaires among the households who live in Atanwala-Knuckles forest area. Also, personal interviews were carried out for descriptive analysis. The findings of this study showed that all of the economic impact dimensions had significant positive effect. Further, the research found that the community showed a favourable stance for tourism development in the knuckles forest reserve and it helps the coordination of the recreation-based rural tourism development in the destination. Therefor, the policymakers should capitalize these opportunities to create several labor-intensive job opportunities for women, youth, poor and unskilled persons resinding the area.

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