

**Potentials of Developing Sri Lanka as an International Wedding
Tourism Destination
(study based on Colombo and Negambo Areas)**

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Wedding tourism has increased popularity over the past decade and is recognized as a significant market segment with a possibility of enhancing effectiveness of the industry. This is a niche market, which has not yet been capitalized and can be developed as a diversified tourism product and a method for minimizing the effect of seasonality. Hence, this study is aimed at identifying the potential of developing Sri Lanka as an international wedding tourism destination. Primary data was collected from 40 foreign wedding couples and 10 Sri Lankan wedding handlers applying judgmental sampling method and interview method for collecting data. Colombo and Negambo areas were the research areas for data collection. Both quantitative and qualitative data analyzing techniques were used. The study found that there is a positive perception among foreign wedding couples about Sri Lanka as a wedding destination. However, the wedding tourism industry has many issues and the challenges in Sri Lanka. The major challenges are the lack of involvement by the government, government rules and the regulations, lack of properties in the industry and lack of sufficient educated and trained staff in the industry. The current situation of wedding tourism industry in Sri Lanka is positive with the new trends like low cost weddings, traditional Sri Lankan weddings, and Indian weddings. The analysis concluded that there is a potential to develop international wedding tourism in Sri Lanka through the existing resources. However, the industry need to realize the real significance of wedding tourism in the Sri Lankan context.

Keywords: New trends, Tourist perception, Wedding tourism, Wedding destination