



**Investigation on Geotourism as a tool for tourism
development in Sri Lanka.**

**(With special reference to Ussangoda National Park and
Mahapelessa (Madunagala) hot springs)**

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ABSTRACT

Geotourists are experience hunters seeking knowledge while appreciating earths' geological wonders through Geotourism. As an emanating trend Geotourism can be defined as tourism activity where visitors can witness ABC attributes, abiotic, biotic and culture with more focus on abiotic properties of the natural setting. Geotourism as a wing of sustainable tourism, this investigation's purpose is to find out whether the Geotourism application could be used as a lucrative tool for sustainable tourism development in Sri Lanka. The study was carried out in a qualitative manner with twenty in-depth interviews from tourism stakeholders including tourists, local community and government officers. The researcher used thematic analysis method to analysis data. The results of the study revealed that lack of awareness towards Geotourism concept causes Geotourism in Sri Lanka in its infancy, though Sri Lanka is having abundant of marketable opportunity for its diversified geotourists locations to initiate Geotourism developments. In conclusion it could be emphasized that geotourism can be used as a lucrative tool for tourism development by addressing certain issues like improper place management, lack of promotion by examining two excellent geoheritage sites Ussangoda National Park and Mahapelessa (Madunagala) hot springs. The research recommends new strategies for Geotourism development such as improving proper place management, propagating awareness programs on Geotourism, adaptation of geoconservation, providing quality geo interpretation etc. Future studies should focus on diversified geoheritage sites, as this investigation limited to geoheritage sites with geological significances.

Key words: Geotourism, Geotourists, Geoheritage sites, Tourism development, Ussangoda National Park, Mahapelessa hot spring