

Impact of Beach Tourism on the Host Community: Evidence from Arugam Bay Beach in Sri Lanka

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One of the main and foremost attractions of Sri Lanka is its long, sandy beaches which extend all over the island. A wide tourism market has arisen in and around the beaches in Sri Lanka. Arugam Bay beach is one of the ten world's best surfing points. As beach tourism is carried out along the coasts of the island, it influences the region as well as the whole country in many ways as in positive as well as negative. This study focuses on the beach tourism activities at Arugam Bay, its positive and negative impacts on economy, socio culture and environment of the host community. Main objective of this study is to identify the beach tourism activities and to find the kind of impact they have on the host community. Primary data was collected through structured interviews from 30 respondents. Sample comprised from host community, foreign tourists, local tourists and the government officials in Arugam Bay. Analysis was done using thematic analysis which identified 3 main themes i.e. economic impacts, sociocultural impacts and environmental impacts along with several sub themes. Income generation, job creation regional development, cost of living and increasing real estate rates are the main economic impact whilst, living standards, illegal activities, misbehaviors, drug abuse and cultural influence under socio cultural impacts and environmental concern, pollution and overcrowding come under environmental impacts. The results of the study conclude that the beach tourism activities have a positive impact on the economy and the environment of the host community, while the activities negatively affect the socio culture of the host community. This study will contribute for the tourism development with community participation in Arugam Bay.

Keywords: Beach tourism, Arugam Bay, Impact, Host community