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**Socio-Economic Impacts of Backpacker Tourism on
Local Community Perception; a Case Study at Ella
Regional Area.**

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ABSTRACT

Today tourism industry is rapidly growing industry in the world. It is becoming one of the major income generators of many countries. Therefore especially many developing countries embrace tourism as a major industry which brings more economics benefits. Because of that reason impacts of tourism effects on economically as well as socially. Backpacking is becoming an increasingly common place rite of passage for independent travelers of today hence it is not only a small niche segment anymore it is turning into a sizeable market for many destinations. In Sri Lankan context backpacker tourism industry is becoming a sizable niche segment of tourism as it is establish in many destination within the Sri Lanka. Normally backpackers are keen on to interact with local communities therefore social and economic impacts of backpacker tourism strongly feel for communities but the viability of these impacts are still controversial. This study was conducted for mainly identify the social and economic impacts of backpacker tourism on local community perception while identifying the visitor profile of backpackers who visit to the Ella area. In order to identify the socio-economic impacts 60 residents and to identify the visitor profile of backpackers who visit to the Ella area 50 backpackers were selected as sample based on convenience sampling method, using self-administered and five point likert scale questions for collecting data. Descriptive statistics and qualitative In-depth analysis with SPSS software were used to analyze the data. The result revealed that community perception of economic impact was highly positive. They get many benefits from backpacker tourism than negative impacts but most of socio cultural impacts were affecting negative way to the community according to the community perception.

Key words: Backpacker tourism, Social impacts, Economic impacts, Community perception