

ABSTRACT

The Tourism Industry is one of the most rapidly booming industries in the world and it is a major contributor to global economic development. In the tourism industry, Community Based Tourism (CBT) is a booming concept. CBT involves interaction between visitors and host communities and most appropriate for rural regions that will be administered and owned by the community. CBT is built on the local community's active participation. This research aims to examine challenges of promoting CBT in Sri Lanka. Hence, the objectives of the study were to identify the challenges of promoting CBT in the Belihuloya area; to identify and suggest suitable strategies to overcome the challenges in promoting CBT in the Belihuloya area. This study was conducted using qualitative approach. Samples 12 micro, small and medium entrepreneurs were selected using purposive sampling method. Data was collected by using a semi structured direct interview and the interview transcriptions were analyzed through thematic analysis. Lack of infrastructure availability, Lack of awareness of CBT, Insufficient training and education on tourism, No financial support to engage with CBT, No governmental support for the promoting CBT and Lack of motivation are the main challenges to promote CBT in Belihuloya area. Moreover, the study recommends to training and development, marketing and promotion, increasing the awareness of the community on tourism, improving the availability of support services, encouraging community participation, proper management of CBT association, identifying and strengthening community leaders were identified.

Keywords: Community Based Tourism, Challenges, Promoting, Tourism Entrepreneurs