

Challenges and Opportunities for Community Based Tourism Development in Sembuwaththa

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Today tourism industry is a rapidly growing industry in the world as well as in Sri Lanka. Hence, the demand of travelling for experiencing the community based tourism related activities within the world is gradually increasing. The concept of community based tourism is a type of tourism that takes socio, economic and environmental sustainability in to account. In this context, this study specially focuses on identifying the key challenges and opportunities for CBT development in Sembuwaththa tourist destination which is located in Matale, Sri Lanka. Further study also attempts to find out the attitudes and perception of local communities on tourism development in Sembuwaththa tourist destination. In order to achieve these objectives, data were generated through qualitative (in-depth interviews) and quantitative (survey questionnaires) approaches. The researcher has collected data from 10 local community people who are living in Sembuwaththa area and 100 tourists who visited this area according to the convenience sampling method. The quantitative data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics and exploratory factor analysis with the support of SPSS 21.0 version while qualitative data were used to validate the study. In this research several challenges have been identified for CBT development in the study area. Such as lack of knowledge and interest of local community towards CBT, language barriers of local community and lack of infrastructure facilities were identified as challenges. However, number of opportunities like the strategic location site, tourists has high satisfaction level and revisit intention towards the destination after they visited the site, high demand for recreational activities and positive attitude of the CBT participants towards CBT were identified as opportunities for CBT development in the area. This article proposes strategies to develop the tourism industry in the destination with the community participation in sustainable manner.

Keywords: Community based tourism; Community based tourism development, CBT challenges and opportunities