

Factors Affecting Tourists' Willingness Towards Agro-Tourism

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Agro-tourism is an emerging and very prospective sub-sector of tourism which is still the infant stage in Sri Lanka. Agro-tourism is an important alternative source of income for rural dwellers including small-scale farmers in many countries of the developing world. There should be basic facilities to start and operate an agro tourism destination and hence, it has an ability to generate benefits for the owner and the surrounding community. To develop the agro tourism sector of the country, it is important to carry out research studies to generate a comprehensive understanding. The objectives of this study are to find consumer willingness towards Agro tourism in Sri Lanka and to identify potential agro tourists, identify their attitudes and preferences. To accomplish the objectives of the study, a semi- structured questionnaire was prepared and direct interviews were conducted with both local and foreign tourists who visited tourism destinations in Ella, Sigiriya and Anuradhapura. In the survey, 100 local tourists and 150 foreign tourists were selected using convenient sampling method. Chi-squared analysis was used to find the factors that affect the willingness of tourists on agro-tourism. While 19 factors were analyzed by chi-squared test, results showed that 13 factors influenced on the willingness of foreign tourists on agro-tourism. Furthermore, only occupation, education, tourists' expectation, days which are preferred to stay in a farm and facilities significantly affect the willingness of local tourists on agro-tourism.

Keywords: Agro-tourism, tourists' willingness, tourists' attitudes