

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF BEHAVIOR OF
LOCAL TOURISTS IN THE CONTEXT OF YALA
NATIONAL PARK IN SRI LANKA**

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ABSTRACT

Environmental impacts of behavior of local tourists in the context of Yala national park Sri Lanka.

Key words: *Environmental Impacts, Local Tourists, Departments*

Yala national park is a non-valuable natural resource of Sri Lanka. It is the second largest protected area which includes bio diversities, environmental systems, endemic flora and fauna and so on. Meanwhile the tourism industry of Sri Lanka has stepped up to a glamorous stage in present context after the 30 years terrible war of the country. Large number of local and foreign tourist who are interested on wild life tourism, are visiting most of places in Sri Lanka and Yala national park has become a tourism hotspot among them. In accordance with the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority more than 68 per cent of Yala visitors are local tourists. In present scenario many media report that various negative environmental impacts have been occurred inside the Yala national park due to the behavior of the visitors.

This study is based on the environmental impacts of behavior of local tourists in the context of Yala national park Sri Lanka. Objectives of this study are to find out those awkward behaviors of the locals within the national park and after analyzing them suggest a sustainable frame work for the Yala national park. Data has been collected by observation at the national park for three separate days and conducting twenty interviews with park guides, jeep drivers and the park warden. Throughout above methods number of derogatory behaviors of local tourists have been detected and categorized them according to the nature of the inadaptable behavior, such as ;

- i. Over visitation.
- ii. Disturbance to the wild life.
- iii. Exceeding the time limits of visitation.
- iv. Pollution inside the park.
- v. Violation of park rules by vehicles
- vi. Dilemma occurred with camping.
- vii. Animal deaths resulting from vehicle accidents.

. By analyzing these behaviors, at the later part, a sustainable framework such as;

- Modify visitation
- Provide more trained guides to accompany visitor groups to provide interpretations and supervise wildlife viewing.
- Reduce visitation
- Establish technical standards for vehicles and allowed entrance only for vehicle these meet above expectations.
- Conducting a small education program which explains the values of the park and the need for visitors to modify their behavior while in the park.
- Park infrastructure, for example toilet facilities, should be upgraded in order to serve more visitors.
- Implement a proper garbage management system within the park.
- Limit the length of stay inside the park.

for the Yalanational park has been proposed to avoid particular departments with a view of protecting the natural values of the park.