

An Analysis of Impact of Rural Tourism Development on Local Communities in Sri Lanka (With Special Reference to Haputale Area)

D.M.M.S. Dissanayaka* and A.A. Idroos

Department of Tourism Studies, Uva Wellassa University, Badulla, Sri Lanka

**Corresponding Author E-mail: sulochanamanoji077@gmail.com, TP: +94766651662*

Tourism is one of the important industries that help the development of local areas. Tourism results in more benefits to the local communities including improvements in their livelihood. However, active participation of local communities and proper coordination among all stakeholders are more important in gaining benefits from tourism activities, otherwise, it can be disturbed the activities of the local communities by tourism development. This research mainly aimed at identifying expected benefits of tourism, to identify the levels of impact and the problems and issues of local tourism development in the Haputale area. The study utilized a qualitative research approach with 30 samples in the community members in Haputale division. The researcher adopts the focus groups and structured interviews to gather primary data. Collected data were transcribed and analyzed manually using thematic analysis. According to the findings of the study, there were more economic benefits than the other social and cultural benefits and environmental benefits from tourism. The study found that tourism provides many employment opportunities for the residents in the area. Nevertheless, there were some problems and issues faced by the community and expectations such as the need for awareness programs, development of infrastructure facilities, agricultural facilities and economic resources and deforestation issues while developing rural tourism areas. Finally, there are some recommendations such as Regional development planning, Maximize the awareness about the importance of education, Provide public transport facilities where necessary to enhance accessibility, Government involvement of making policy framework to improve community participation in tourism benefit gaining in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Rural tourism; Tourism benefits; Local community; Problems and issue