

ABSTRACT

Tourism is one of the world's fastest growing industries and is a major source of income for many countries. Cultural heritage tourism is considered as one of rapidly growing sector in tourism industry. Sri Lankan tourism industry also shows a rapid growth while becoming a famous destination among travelers. However cultural heritage tourism sector of Sri Lanka shows slow growth amid the rapid development of other tourism sectors. Specially in Northern Sri Lanka, Jaffna peninsula has lot of potential to promote tourism since the host community involvement towards cultural heritage tourism was quite less and also all the host people not aware about this. Hence, the objectives of this study were to examine the role of host community to promote cultural heritage tourism in Northern Sri Lanka and identify the challenges and opportunities faced by host community in Northern Sri Lanka. The purposive sampling technique was used to select 13 respondents from government and private sector. A qualitative research design was adopted in this research. The information was derived from direct interviews and content analysis was utilized for data analysis. Findings indicated that the most of the time policy and decision makers, financial supporter or investor role play by government sector personnel. And also host people play as information provider and facilitator, entrepreneur role for CHT in Jaffna peninsula. Moreover, finding identify Government influences, Lack of understanding about CHT, Covid 19 and economic instability, and Connectivity and host people mindset as challenges and Geographic location and potential for significance attraction and younger generation interest and digital platform as opportunities associated with northern Sri Lankan CHT tourism promotion.

Key words: cultural heritage tourism, role of host community, CHT promotion, challenges, opportunities