

## **Preferences and Attitudes of the Tourists Towards Alcohol Availability and The Policies in Sri Lanka**

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Annually tourists arriving in Sri Lanka has increased up to 14% in 2016. This growth is important and should be maintained for national development. Recent proposals suggest that access to alcoholic drinks for tourists should be increased by reducing tax and increasing access points. A further warning given was that without increasing access for alcohol Sri Lanka is likely to loss many tourists in coming years. Therefore, this study focused on collecting firsthand evidence from tourists to determine the relationship between tourist's arrivals and the opinion of tourists in relation to access to alcohol. Interview administered data was collected from 302 tourists 18 to 78 years of age, from 38 countries, from 9 cities where tourists visit the most. Participants for the survey were selected randomly from hotels, restaurants and while visiting places. Only 1% enjoyed having beer in the pub/hotel. Only 2% suggested access to alcohol should be increased. Difficulty of having a drink and not being able to smoke in public places was 2.6 and 1% respectively. More than 90% agreed on the policies banning of public drinking and smoking. Interestingly, number of participants highly appreciated it and stated that it was a life changing opportunity for them to change their smoking and drinking habits. The main reason to revisit Sri Lanka was nature, history and culture. Around 5% will revisit because they love the food while none of them stated they will revisit to go to clubs or for night life. Only 1.5% participants say that they will skip revisiting Sri Lanka as they have problems in obtaining alcohol in some places. It is evident that access to alcohol or availability of alcohol has not been seen by tourists as a problem and it has not been affected in their decisions to revisit Sri Lanka.

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