

Role of Stakeholders in Promoting Pro-Poor Tourism in Uva Province

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Tourism is given a great significance in most of the developing countries around the world as a tool driven for the economic development. Although the poverty reduction is not usually at the core intentions of the tourism agenda, yet tourism is a significant piece in many poor countries and is already affecting the livelihoods of millions of poor people, positively and negatively. Hence, the pro-poor tourism (PPT) is a globally growing concept intended to reduce poverty by increasing net benefits for the poor from core tourism activities in the rural economies ensuring the core elements of sustainability. Badulla District being one of the poorest in the country rich with numerous tourism resources, PPT can be used as a magnetic solution in developing rural economy. Purpose of this study was to identify the role of different stakeholders in developing PPT in the Uva Province. A sample of 20 was selected using convenient sampling technique including 02 academics, 03 government officers representing the provincial tourism, 08 community members and 03 school teachers from Mahiyanganaya, Ella, and Lunugala DS divisions, and 04 tourists from Ella in the study. The semi structured interview method was used to collect primary data. Results from the thematic analysis reviewed that the access for poor to the market is not sufficient in the current tourism hierarchy. Further, the need for a broader policy framework was highlighted with a participatory approach. Awareness on tourism industry and its benefits to the grass root level, necessary actions to fill the skills gap to develop enterprises and local capacity, managing costs and expectations, maximizing collaboration across stakeholders, and participation in decision making were significant highlights by all levels of stakeholders. The pro-poor tourism initiatives will be a successful key to unlock opportunities for the poor –for economic and financial gains, as well as other livelihood benefits.

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