

# **An Analysis of the Push and Pull Motives for Choosing Sri Lanka as the Wedding Tourism Destination: With Special Reference to Southern Province**

A.M.D.B. Nawarathna and A.A. Idroos

*Department of Public Administration, Uva Wellassa University, Badulla, Sri Lanka*

Events are becoming established as an integral and major part of tourism development and marketing strategies. Event tourism could be used to describe this phenomenon and this could be defined as the systematic development, planning, marketing and holding of events as tourist attractions. Wedding tourism has increased popularity over the past decade and is recognized as a significant market segment with a possibility of enhancing effectiveness of the industry by amalgamating two segments as one destination. Tourism motivations are important factors in understanding tourist behaviour in relation to selecting the destinations' choice, especially for the wedding market. This is already existing niche market which has not been yet capitalized and can be developed as a diversified tourism product and the effects of seasonality can be minimized. Hence, the purpose of the study was to determine the various travel motivations of wedding tourists to Sri Lanka. The primary data collected by the author from 200 foreign tourists applying convenience sampling technique in Southern province. Quantitative data analytical method was employed in analysing the data using Descriptive statistics. The findings reflect that wedding tourists are primarily attracted by the destinations' attributes such as the famous "sun, sea and sand" which forms part of the characteristics of small tropical islands, followed by other pull attributes. Further, push factors like destination marketing and promotion encouraged tourists to celebrate their wedding function and honeymoon in Sri Lanka. Increasing marketing efforts can prove to be a powerful mechanism in order to encourage the wedding tourism. Moreover, destination managers should better understand the travel motivations of tourists before developing and marketing product and services.

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