



# **The Impacts of Developing a Hydropower Plant in Kithulgala Adventure Tour Site**

**(With special reference to Adventure Activity  
Operators)**

This dissertation is submitted as a partial fulfillment of the degree  
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## ABSTRACT

Adventure Tourism is a niche tourism area, which involves exploration or travel to remote areas, where the traveler should expect the risk and uncertainty. Adventure tourism can be mainly divided into hard and soft adventure tourism. White Water Rafting is a big segment of the international soft adventure tourism industry. Kelani River in Kithulgala area is considered as Sri Lanka's best river for White Water Rafting as it has many good rapids and the water is potable. There are about 30 Adventure Activity Operators along the Kelani River in Kithulgala area and they run by typical lifestyle entrepreneurs. Who have dedicated considerable time, talent and capital resources to developing the rafting industry on the Kelani River in Kithulgala. Kithulgala village also has evolved with the White Water Rafting industry and there are about 1500 families who are indirectly get benefits through job opportunities and the spin-off industries. It is estimated that the tourism industry in Kithulgala generate US \$17.5 million per annum directly for the local economy. Moreover, White Water Rafting in Kithulgala is a significant part of the local economy, which attracts both domestic and international tourists. However, development of the Broadlands hydropower plant threatens to destroy the rapids and negatively effect on all White Water Rafting leading to numerous economic, social, and environmental problems. As the most affected party due to the development of the hydropower project, Adventure Activity Operators were interviewed using semi-structured interview method in order to assess the current situation of the Kithulgala Adventure Tour Site, the economic social and environmental impacts and to assess their perspective regarding implementation of the power plant. Researcher used thematic analysis method to analyze qualitative data using Microsoft Excel 2010. According to the findings of this study, environment and the economy are the mostly affected areas due to the constructions of the power plant. It has led to pollute the water, sound pollution as well there is a potential to occur landslips in the future in the Kithulgala Adventure Tour Site. Furthermore, it leads to destroy natural rapids and to reduce water level and it directly affect to reduce the number of tourists to the Kithulgala area and loss of adventure activity operators main source of income generation.

**Keywords:** *economic benefits, hydropower-plant, lifestyle entrepreneur, White Water Rafting*