

Potentials for Agro Tourism Development in Pinnawala, Sri Lanka

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Agrotourism, as an alternative to mass tourism, is a rapidly growing segment of the tourism industry. At present, agro-tourism is done by most of the countries in the world aiming at sustainable rural development. Pinnawala area has several features that can be developed as an agro-tourism destination. Due to the lack of government involvement and support, awareness on agro-tourism and infrastructure facilities, the development of agro-tourism has been slowed down in Sri Lanka. There is an empirical gap due to the limited studies done in the agro-tourism sector. Pinnawala is an emerging area of interest among tourists where the agro-tourism can be practiced. This research aimed to study the potentials for the application of agro-tourism in the Pinnawala area. After, a comprehensive literature review, a structured questionnaire was constructed. The target sample for the study was tourists who visited Pinnawala from July to August 2019 and the tourism stakeholders in the area. The convenience sampling method was used and the primary data were collected from 73 tourists using the structured questionnaire and from 7 tourism stakeholders with in-depth interviews. Data were analysed with descriptive analysis, Pearson's correlation coefficient, thematic analysis, and Friedman test. According to the results, it was revealed that there was a relationship between environmental facilities and potential to the agrotourism development in the area. Lack of government involvement and support, lack of agro-tourism awareness, lack of agro tourism-based activities in the area were identified as the most influencing challenges and issues to develop agro-tourism in the area. Based on the findings, it is recommended to concern on development of agro-tourism awareness and training, implementing agro tourism-based activities and products, formulate agro-tourism standards to promote the agro-tourism in the destination. Further, comprehensive research related to the agro-tourism activities and product development would be useful to develop agro-tourism in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Agro tourism, Potentials, Tourism development