

Destination Marketing to Promote Tea Tourism Socio-Economic Approach on Community Development

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Abstract

Tourism, one of the fastest growing service economy sectors, has contributed directly as well indirectly for the socio-economic development of destinations around the globe. Novel paradigm of tea tourism has been identified as one niche Tourism segment enriched with potentiality to enhance the brand image and marketing of tea-producing destinations as contemporary tourists seek out authentic and unique experiences. "Ceylon Tea" and Tourism are inseparable words as tea growing areas are undoubtedly the most beautiful places as well attractive tourism destinations within in Sri Lanka This paper highlights the impact on community from Tea tourism as the objectives developed to identify the community participation in tea tourism and community opinions for future development. The study was strengthened through the triangulation of both quantitative and qualitative data which were obtained by means of the questionnaire survey and interviews, Judgemental sampling method and quantitative methods has been adopted to select sample. This study is conducted in local community around the tea tourism destinations who are benefited from tea tourism in Nuwara-Eliya and Badulla districts in Sri Lanka and sample consisted from 78 local community respondents. Study recommends to develop a proper information base with a strategic promotional plan, massive promotional campaign implementation through Sri Lankan ambassadors, Social media marketing to popularize brand "Ceylon Tea", waste management system on sustainable tourism practice, special events and more leisure activities in tea tourism destinations and Home stay accommodation with collaboration of community.

Key Words: *Ceylon Tea, Community Development, Social Media Marketing, Tea, Tourism.*

Introduction

Travel & Tourism is one of the world's largest service sector industry where providing billions of employments for different sectors and regions as international tourist arrivals grew by 4.4% in 2015 to reach a total of 1,184 million in 2015 (UNWTO World Tourism Barometer). With the gradual development of the tourism sector, people willing to engage in new tourism experiences and concepts as niche tourism emerged as a new concept (Fernando, 2015; Fernando 2014). Where *niche tourism* refers to how a specific

tourism product can be personalized to meet the needs of a particular tourist segment as Tea tourism has been identified as one niche Tourism segment emerged. Tourism noticeably has the potential to enhance the brand image and marketing of tea-producing destinations as contemporary tourists seek out authentic and unique experiences related to the appreciation and consumption of the beverage. Tourism related to tea encourages both consumption and the development of relationships with potential customers as not harming the Tea estates but provide double income (Fernando et al.,2016). “Ceylon Tea” and Tourism are inseparable words as tea growing areas are undoubtedly the most beautiful places as well attractive tourism destinations within in Sri Lanka (Ceylon Tea Land, 2013). Tea is farmed in over 30 countries of the world including Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Tanzania, Thailand, and Turkey although the India, China, and Sri Lanka work out 60% of the total production according to Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO, 2012). Climatic and geographic conditions of Sri Lanka have formed appropriate possibility for tea cultivation as historical evidences proved that tea tree has a long history dated back to the late 19th Century. Further Tea trails have been included in most of the tour packages offered by the travel agencies in their tour itineraries. Potentials for the development of the segment is enormous with the strengths as the tourism industry needs to push to strengthen Tea tourism being practiced to day to reap the optimum results and benefits, particularly with regard to the focused marketing efforts aimed at the high spending visitors. a new paradigm need to be introduced to focus more on Tourism income rather to increase the tourists’ arrivals as the set of post-war peaceful situation of the destination (Fernando,2015). Improving this Tea Tourism niche market the steps could be taken for promotion and development Tea Tourism as a novel avenue that ultimately improves the livelihood of the community.

Research Questions

Tea is one of the main resources that can promote as niche tourism segment in Sri Lanka as the amount of tea plantations and world renowned brand “Ceylon Tea”. Tea tourism is a type of tourism concept which can be promoted in Sri Lanka, Specially in Nuwaraeliya and Badulla as plantations are widely spread in both districts. Hence this paper highlights the impact on community from Tea tourism.

- How is the community participation in tea tourism?
- What are the community opinions for future tea tourism?

Research Objectives has been developed

- To identify how is the community participation in tea tourism.
- To identify community opinions for future tea tourism.

Review of Literature

The offering of a cup of tea is a universal sign of hospitality, in either a home or commercial hospitality setting (Walton, 2001). Practitioners recognize that tea offered in the lodging setting is an “experience” and that the current evolution of tea into a “trendy” product is not a surprise. For hospitality, tea consequently serves as both a symbol and a resource with considerable potential for the provision of commercial hospitality as the tea culture in china revolves around creating a comfortable and positive experience for guests. Tea has been a part of the history and economy of Sri Lanka since it was introduced in the late nineteenth century, after the failure of the coffee crop due to a fungus (Martin, 2007). In 1867 a Scotsman the name of James Taylor introduced tea to Sri Lanka as the area planted in tea rose from 10 acres in 1867 to 1000acres in 1875and to over 384,000 acres at the turn of the century (Fernando, 2000). Known as the ‘Isle of Tea’ (Heiss & Heiss, 2007), the country has six major production regions; Kandy, Nuwara Eliya, Uva, Rathnapura, Dimbula, and Galle. Sri Lanka produces mainly black teas divided into three categories of lower growing varieties. Jolliffe (2003) examined tea history, tea heritage and the tea industry in relation

to tourism, as tea plantations, gardens, and factories not originally intended to attract visitors and the purpose built and organized tea Exhibits, museums, tours and festivals designed to attract visitors (Jolliffe, 2003). Tea tourism was defined as ‘tourism that is motivated by an interest in the history, traditions and consumption of the beverage, tea’ (Jolliffe, 2007). Sri Lanka has rich resources for supplying the tea related tourism experiences; nature walks in tea gardens, character accommodation in former tea factories and tea planter bungalows, tea tasting and retail in café’s overlooking tea gardens and tours of producing factories (Cochrane, 2008). Although the tea plantation sector is a significant part of the socio-economic environment of Sri Lanka, less attention has been given to developing tourism in this sector. Developing sustainable tourism in tea plantations would help develop market retention and stability of tea, which has gradually fallen in the face of competition and the industry recognizes more investments on value addition rather exporting in bulk (Athukorala, 2008).

A community is a group of people, often living in the same geographic area, who identify themselves as belonging to the same group. Communities are encompassed of specific groups, such as landless and those with land, rich and poor, new immigrant and old residents as number of separate interest groups that belong to one community may be affected differently by changes that are introduced. Those community people with some initial disadvantages, such as poor housing, insufficient land or income, tend to be among those excluded from participation ecotourism development. Tea tourism can provide more benefits to the local community where the tourism income would divide as identify what are the potentials, tourists’ attitudes and destination capabilities and community impact by tea tourism. There is lack of consideration on community impact by tea tourism and how to give a positive impact on the community and similarly there is no literature on impact of tea tourism on community

Research Methodology

Large percentage of tea plantations located in Central Province and Uva Province hence the sample has been chosen from Nuwara Eliya and Badulla districts community around the selected sites. The study was strengthened through the triangulation of both quantitative and qualitative data which were obtained by means of the questionnaire survey and interviews. Primary data collected by interviews and secondary data collected from Sri Lankan Tourism Development Authority, websites, journal articles and books. Judgemental sampling method and quantitative methods has been adopted to select sample. This study is conducted in local community around the tea tourism destinations who are benefited from tea tourism in Nuwara-Eliya and Badulla districts. The sample consisted from 78 local community respondents. Primary data was analysed by using descriptive statistical techniques and chi-squared analysis is used to discover the profile of tourists and community relations, how community participation in tea tourism and what are the community opinion for future tea tourism.

Results and Discussions

Validity and Reliability

Testing of the reliability is very significant before applying statistical tools. The internal reliability of the items was verified by computing the Cronbach’s alpha (Nunnally, 1978) suggested that a minimum alpha of 0.6 sufficed for early stage of research. Reliability value of questionnaire of the study is estimated to be 0.862. As the Cronbach’s alpha in this study were all much higher than 0.6, the constructs were therefore deemed to have adequate reliability.

Data Analysis

According to the sample composition male percentage (75%) of community people is higher than female. Respondents are covered by all age groups between 26 years to 55. According to the gathered information, it demonstrates that 36-45 age range is the highest age category compare to other age categories. Further,

researches are investigated that there is no involvement from over 65 people to tourism related business. Low education qualifications communities are involved into tourism business activities around tea plantations. More than 85% community people have up to ordinal level background. There is no any significant different between Sinhala and Tamil community involvement to tourism business (chi-squared test p-value= 0.365 for nationality in table 01). According to the considerable characteristic in Table 01, there is significant different between gender (p-value= 0.000), age (P-value= 0.000), and education qualifications (p-value= 0.000) based on chi-squared test at 5% level of significance.

Table 01: Profile of Community people

Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	19	24.4
	Male	59	75.6
Age	18-25	10	13.2
	26-35	14	18.4
	36-45	33	42.1
	46-56	14	18.4
	56-65	6	7.9
Education Qualifications	8 Pass	37	47.4
	Ordinary Level	33	42.1
	Advanced Level	8	10.5
Nationality	Sinhala	35	44.7
	Tamil	43	55.3

Source: Field Survey 2016

Table 02: Way of Contribution to Tourists Businesses

Contribution for Tourism	Responses		Percent of Cases
	Number	Percent	
Selling foods to tourists	26	18.2	21.1
Provide Transport	43	29.5	34.2
Maintaining Retail Shop	43	29.5	34.2
Tour Guides	23	15.9	18.4
Other	10	6.8	7.9
Total	144	100.0	115.8

Source: Field Survey 2016

Above Table 02 illustrates that highest percentage of community people are provided transport facilities to tourists, followed by retail businesses. However, there is significant different between way of contribution to tourists businesses (Chi-squared test= 27.52 and p-value= 0.000). According to the sample, none of people rent vehicles for tourists. Further results suggested that 55.3% of people involved to the tourism business between 1-10 years. There is only 6% of people started their business before 20 years ago. Most of community peoples are engaged with farming activities (35.6%) and rest of them are involved in other careers and businesses before develop tourism in that area. After develop tourism they sell their goods for tourists and they sell some items by targeting tourists. After involved to tourism related business 50% of people are earning more than Rs.30,000 per month. There is a significant income growth after involve to the tourism business in tea tourism areas. It helps to uplifting there living pattern.

Current situation of tea tourism business is measured by using five Point Likert-scales. Current situation of tourism business and how it is benefited to communities are measured. Most of them are highly agreed that tourism helps to improve the economic conditions of the local community by improving household income of local people. Also, Tourism development generates more benefits than losses for the local community. Moderate number of people agreed that community people are benefiting from tea tourism (Mean= 3.39). Further, very less number of tea tourist business outlets are conducted those areas. However, people who having business get excellent benefit from tea tourism. Most of them are highlighted that they have to face many problems while they are running their business (As an examples: lack of capital (92.1%), seasonality (100%), government Taxes and Regulations (84.2%) and lack of infrastructure (71.1%)). All of respondents are expected government support for their business development. They are suffering from lack of capital and government taxes and regulations. Researches are raised several questions on environment impact. Respondents' opinion is tourists care about environment more than Sri Lankan people. Survey data suggested that community people do not practice sustainable practices.

Table 03: Community Opinions

	Mean	Mode	Std. Deviation	Variance
Local communities should be given priority in the field of tourism entrepreneurship	4.53	5	0.603	0.364
The local community should be given opportunity in decision making	3.95	4	0.733	0.538
The local community should have an opportunity in giving an opinion	4.61	5	0.495	0.245
There should good cooperation between the local community and stakeholders	4.84	5	0.37	0.137
The government should encourages local community involvement in tourism activity	4.5	5	0.604	0.365
The local community should have the authority to control tourism development	3.95	5	0.985	0.97
Private sector should contribute tourism development directly.	4.45	5	0.686	0.47
Private sector should contribute to local community business development.	4.49	5	0.651	0.423

Source: Field Survey 2016

Most of respondents are agreed that Local communities should be given priority in the field of tourism entrepreneurship, the local community should be given opportunity in decision making, the local community should have an opportunity in giving an opinion, there should good cooperation between the local community and stakeholders, the government should encourages local community involvement in tourism activity and the local community should have the authority to control tourism development. When analyse individually almost agree to asked statement. The local community should have an opportunity in giving an opinion and there have respectable cooperation between the local community and stakeholders' variance is less than 30%. Therefore respondents have same ideas about above two statements.

Conclusion and Discussions

This research study has taken the attempt to identify community involvement to tea tourism in Sri Lanka with special reference to Nuwara Eliya and Badulla districts. The researcher mainly focuses on tea tourists and local community. Therefore, structural questionnaire was developed and collected data community people who are engaging in tea tourism industry. The profile of the community people, current situation of contribution from tea tourism to local community, problems faced by local people, expected government support, environment impact and expected future tea tourism development and ideas for future tea tourism

has been taken into consideration in order to identify the potentiality. All the findings reflect on the potential for Tea tourism market. The conclusions are described under objectives community participation in tea tourism and community opinion for future tea tourism.

Concluding remarks in Community Participation in Tea Tourism

Conclusively, Majority of community people who involved in tourism business was male, and not motivated to get good education. Therefore, education level is comparatively low and no any significant different among nationalities. People have to face lot of barriers due to locations are away from town areas. Tourism contribution by local community was very low as not any retail shops or other shops around some tea tourism outlets. Some locations only have one retail shop and one or two transportation facility providers. Portion of people who were engaged in tourism business, 30% of respondents were engaged in providing transportation. Similarly the percentage of respondents was engaged in retail business. Selling food for tourists and guiding tourists had a significant percentage. More than half of the percentage respondents' involvement of tourism was less than 10 years and more than three quarter from sample were earned less than 10,000 Rupees before engaging in tourism business. Moderate number of people agreed that community people are benefiting from tea tourism. There is less number of people benefiting from tea tourism. Also less number of businesses tea tourism outlets are available in those areas. Community contribution is in the lowest level. However, people having business get excellent benefit from tea tourism. Tea tourism helps to improve the economic conditions of the local community who engaged with tourism business and generates good income and benefits than losses for the local community. Similarly due to tourism development only tourism businessmen's living conditions were developed and not much infrastructure development in the tea areas. There was no environment impact by tea tourism development, but local community did not practice sustainability. Tourists were more careful about environment than local people. Lack of capital, seasonality, government taxes and regulations and lack of infrastructure are the major problems faced by majority of community people who are engaged in tourism businesses. Because of the benefits from tourism to local people, they desired to see tourism development in their areas.

Concluding remarks for Community Opinion for Future Tea Tourism

All of the respondents expected government support for their business development. Community people expected government support by reducing taxes and regulations. Nuwara Eliya provincial council take taxes for houses those having slabs. That indicates provincial councils have unfair taxes and regulations. Higher percentages of respondents suffer from taxes and regulation problem. Infrastructure development is another expectation from government. Except people whose businesses located near main road others expect infrastructure development. Local community expects priority in the field of tourism entrepreneurship. They desired to have opportunity in decision making and giving opinion. They have a good cooperation with stakeholders. Similarly government and private sector should encourage people to participate in tea tourism business and give maximum support to develop their businesses.

Suggestions and Policy Implications

Tea is one of main resource that can promote as niche tourism segment in Sri Lanka. Reason behind that is Sri Lanka has considerable amount of tea plantations and related resources. But tea tourism in Sri Lanka has not gained enough publicity. To promote Tea tourism in Sri Lanka this section will sustain suggestions.

- Proper information base regarding tea tourist arrival and Tea tourism destinations with a strategic promotional plan to promote tea tourism destinations in Sri Lanka in all over the world.
- massive promotional campaign implementation through Sri Lankan ambassadors in foreign countries, government officials initially within the Asian and European countries as those countries

- Social media marketing , E-word of mouth, blogs and printed media as promotional techniques to popularize brand “Ceylon Tea”
- proper garbage discharge/waste management system as tea tourism focused on sustainable tourism practice
- special events and more leisure activities in tea tourism destinations such as opportunity for plucking tea leaves, visiting tea plantation and knowledge sharing with tea plucking people, offering tea powder which is made by tea leaves plucked by tourists themselves and tea tasting etc.
- Government should motivate people to engage in tourism business and facilitate capital on credit basis as tax reductions, loans and infrastructure development.
- Home stay units with collaboration of community and promote small-tea-estate holders on collaboration with tea tourism

By implementing above steps and approaches, tea tourism will be the most emerging tourism market in near future which distributes the number of opportunities and benefits to Nuwara Eliya and Badulla districts as well as to whole Sri Lanka.

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