

Rural Tourism and Rural Household Economic Development in Sri Lanka

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Nowadays Tourism plays a leading role in economic development process, as one of the most human sensible industries in the global market. Rural tourism is one of the crucial determinants which mostly deal with rural life patterns to identify significance of tourism industry on economic development. The reliability and correlation of the relationship between contribution of rural tourism activities and rural household economic development was tested by this study to remark the significance of contribution of rural tourism on rural household economic development in Sri Lanka. The research area was selected as the Hiriwadunna grama niladhari division in the Anuradhapura district among a few numbers of villages which conduct rural tourism activities in a regular basis as one of their main livelihood. Basically the study used both primary and secondary data and the research sample included both, villagers from Hiriwadunna grama niladhari division and tourists including both local and foreign who had come to visit Hiriwadunna village within a given period of time. The sample was selected using simple random sampling and strategic sampling methods. The data was collected through structured interviews using two separate questionnaires for villagers and tourists. Collected data was organized using the software as Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and analyzed using correlation co-efficient, reliability tests and the regression analysis. The analysis addressed five research questions as contribution of rural tourism activities as one of their important livelihood (income source), effects of demand for rural tourism activities on households' income, impact of intermediaries on income changes of rural households, overall contribution of rural tourism activities to develop rural household economy and how to improve and to make contribution of rural tourism more efficient as an economic development strategy in rural areas of Sri Lanka. Five hypotheses constructed and tested to identify significance of relationship between two variables in each research question. Though the derived results revealed that rural tourism significantly influenced on economic development of rural households in Sri Lanka, impact of intermediaries, less intervention of the government, lack of formal organizations or a national policy framework have affected negatively on contribution of rural tourism activities on rural household economic development in Sri Lanka. Hence the study suggests that elimination of these drawbacks with a proper guidance of both public and private sectors will be able to enhance the significance of rural tourism as an efficient strategy of developing rural household economy in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Tourism, Rural Tourism, Rural Household Economy, Economic Development, Sri Lanka

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