

Impacts of cultural heritage tourism at UNESCO world heritage sites in Sri Lanka

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Cultural tourism is the sub category of tourism that is concerned with the traveler's engagement with a country or region's culture, specifically the lifestyle of the people in those geographical areas, the history of those people, their art, architecture, religion(s), and other elements that help to shape their way of life. Cultural heritage is one of the most extensive tourism resources in the world. Most journeys which make away from home involve some element of culture. Although heritage sites are protected because of their cultural or historical values, they also have a dynamic value, as they actively contribute to the local and national economy, mainly through tourism. As a tourist destination Sri Lanka can compete successfully with other destinations partly because of its unique cultural resources. Therefore, to grow the tourism industry and make a significant contribution to the national economy, Sri Lanka has to focus on promoting new and effective tourism sub matters. A fresh approach is to promote the cultural heritage tourism which highly concern about the wellbeing of the host communities and culture. Therefore, the focus of this paper is to investigate cultural heritage tourism and how it affects the entire community positively or negatively. The survey was conducted as an exploratory study highlighting. The study was based on both primary and secondary data including observations, questionnaires, books, magazines etc. The practice of cultural heritage tourism is one of the main segments of the tourism industry which enhances the cultural heritage tourism at the UNESCO world heritage sites in Sri Lanka. To achieve this motive, the researchers explored a sample of 05 foreign tourists and 05 domestic tourists at the UNESCO world heritage sites in Sri Lanka. The results of the study revealed that because of cultural heritage tourism we can see the cultural preservation and building infrastructure helps build social capital, promotes preservation of local traditions, customs and culture. UNESCO now recognizes intangible cultural heritage as important as buildings. A market for experiences and traditional projects provide the economic support for keeping these skills and traditions alive, promote positive behavior, and help to improve the community's image and pride. Tourism industry is keen to create an informal market. Due to the tourism industry, issues like drug trafficking, robberies, prostitution, child labor are growing rapidly. In particular, many cultural problems have occurred as a result of the lack of the relationship between tourists and hosts. There are cultural differences between tourists and residents such as; religious beliefs, traditions, customs, costumes and fashion. The issues related to them are getting worse. On the other hand, generation values, local cultures have been commercialized because of the tourism industry. Likewise, local handicraft products are in deteriorating quality due to the large scale