

Expectations and Reality of Tourism Development: A Case Study on Unawatuna, from the South Coast Tourist Region of Sri Lanka.

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During the nineteen sixties international tourism began to play an important role in the economy of the newly independent countries of Asia, Africa, and South Africa, and these countries embraced international tourism as a medium to overcome their economic ills, such as the acute shortage of foreign exchange, chronic unemployment and slow economic growth. In short, development of tourism was considered as the Passport to Development.

Since 1967 Sri Lanka too has launched several measures to develop her tourist industry with the aim of achieving several objectives, such as creation of employment opportunities, generation of foreign exchange, development of peripheral areas. Tourism sector was expected to develop in an organized manner. But due to the urgency of meeting the expectations relied on tourism development, and also due to the profitability of this new area of economy, there was a big rush for investing in tourism development.

Since the initiation of tourism development in Sri Lanka (in 1967), it was seen that peripheral regions were considered as potential areas for tourism development. With the introduction of tourism these regions have experienced positive as well as negative impacts, especially along the south coast tourist region.

The present paper is centered on analyzing the pros and cons of tourism development, in Unawatuna, located in the south coast tourist region of Sri Lanka. The rich environmental quality in the area has attracted most of the tourists who travelled beyond Galle, and within a time span of little more than two decades, Unawatuna has transformed into a very popular beach tourist destination.

Key Words: Economic development; Employment opportunities; Foreign exchange; Peripheral Region; Coast region

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