

A Study On Opportunities And Challenges For Employment In Tourism Industry In - Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

This study aims identifying barriers for potential employment for people in Northern Province and it will facilitate people who make efforts to produce human resource requirements in tourism industry in Sri Lanka. The sample size has been determined by using stratified sampling method and convenience sampling method was used to select respondents. Secondary data were collected from Northern Province office. Primary data were collected from job seekers and employees in other industries among divisions of Northern Province. A pre-tested structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data. Descriptive statistics, ANOVA and Friedman test were employed to analyze data. Among the selected sample, there was a few who employed in tourism industry. The results revealed social considerations, recruitment process, skills development, progression pathways, cultural barriers and lack of infrastructure facilities are significant barriers for tourism employment in Northern Province. It is recommended to address the above to make tourism employment attractive for rural job seekers. Furthermore, future research should focus on impacts of tourism employment on quality of life in Northern Province.

Key Words: *Tourism Employment, Barriers, Northern Province*

INTRODUCTION

Tourism in Sri Lanka, particularly in Northern Province has been identified as a priority sector because it can create a foundation for economic growth of the nation through provision of employment and earning of foreign exchange. Many researchers including Aslam and Awang (2015), Ashe (2005), Ashley, Boyd, and Goodwin (2000) and Amarasekara Daya (2001) note that tourism is more labour intensive industry compared with other industries. Throughout the world, local communities are among the most important and affected stakeholders, including tourists, travel agents, hospitality service providers, local communities, tourist guild, and tourism related government department and transport companies, in tourism (Su & Wall, 2014).the need to engage local communities in the tourism development has been recognized (Timothy, 2011). However, interests of local communities are often neglected despite the common acknowledgement of their importance in heritage tourism with their rich local knowledge and experience of the site. Community involvement in tourism takes a variety of forms and those can be categorized into two major groups; participation in decision making and participation in benefits (Tosun, 2001; Tosun, 2006; Tosun & Timothy, 2001). Travel and tourism is one of the fastest growing industries and considered to be the world's largest service industry (Hui, Wan, and Ho, 2007). Sri Lanka also with its unique geographical location, diversity, quality human resources, peace and stability has all the ingredients in place to play a key role in the regional development as a fast emerging market economy in Asia. The specific

strategies related to tourism in the five year master plan are, creating an environment conducive for tourism, attracting the right type of tourists to the country, ensuring

the departing guests are happy, improving domestic tourism and contributing towards improving global image of Sri Lanka. In Sri Lankan context, it is estimated that 2.5Mn tourist arrivals by 2016 will require around 45,000 hotels rooms and 500,000 employees catering to the industry (Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority, 2010). Under the tourism strategies finding new tourism products like eco - tourism, agro tourism, pro poor tourism, rural tourism. Product development is very important to achieve goals and objectives of the country. Rural tourism can be dated back to the mid- 19th century. At that time, people suffered from high intensity and pressure of work caused by industrialization and urbanization. They want to get relaxed through outdoor activities, thereby; rural areas come to be first choice (Rui, Jiawei and Chunya, 2002). Rural tourism has turned into a leading economic activity and studies show a positive relationship between developing rural tourism and an increase income. It can be suitable way to enhance economic advantage and employment (Naser, Abbas and Sayyed, 2011). Rural tourism could be considered as the principal route for increasing employment of rural labors, while studying French rural tourism development (Noel, 1990). Sri Lankan tourism industry is now running with human resource shortage in the accommodation sector and in related services. As the annual output of about 1500 graduates is the requirement for the industry. The responsibility of building the human resources to the tourism industry has been taken from individual groups in public and private sectors.

Sri Lanka is an island state of 65,610 Km², situated in the Indian Ocean to the South and East of the Indian sub – continent known as the pearl of the Indian Ocean; Sri Lanka consists of nine (09) provinces. This study focuses on Northern Province. Northern Province covers about 14% of the land mass of Sri Lanka. Its total extent is around 8,849 Sq.km and around 40% of Sri Lanka's costal area is within this province. The distance from Talaimannar to Rameswaram in Southern India is just 35 km.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

Many researchers related to tourism industry, have been identified the link between the importance of rural tourism development and creating human resources from rural areas to the industry. Tourism is a rather important field in rural development which can build up opportunities and facilities especially for employment and regional income and play a crucial role in receiving and rebuilding rural regions (Naser, Abbas & Sayyed 2011). In the fourth phase of the national development plan and the 20- year prospect rural tourism has not received due attention; besides, in 'the national development plan and tourism and management, the concept of rural tourism development in the rural areas have not been properly dealt with (Papeli, 2007). It also takes account of the people who must have access to the villages, which makes it possible to get benefits to the local people. Therefore, having access must be in balance with rural needs and a long term protection of rural resources (Sharpely, 2002). As a developing country filled with rural areas, Sri Lanka is also better to realize its' condition to build human resources related to tourism industry among rural communities. The following is key objectives of this study; to identify Opportunities and challenges for human resources related tourism industry in Northern Province and to educate people on the importance of tourism industry.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The explorer Marco Polo of the 12th century wrote that Sri Lanka is the finest island in the whole world. For centuries it had been great tourism destination particularly for European travelers. There

are lots of tourism sectors in Sri Lanka. Mainly focus areas in Sri Lanka are beach tourism, cultural tourism, tea tourism, eco-tourism, religious tourism and rural tourism (Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority, 2010). Many rural areas in developing countries are also major tourism attractions (Sanjay, 2008). Rural tourism is largely a domestic phenomenon with a disparate nature across countries and continents (Shunli, 2009). The supply of rural tourism products corresponds with tourism demands in a region and the demand depends on the good value, services and facilities. The direction of rural tourism demands is a variable which depends on domestic and international visitors (Gharah, 2008). Rural tourism is an important means of enhancing employment and income and can help social and economic development of rural societies (Sharpley, 2002). Reaching a good development in rural areas means considering such factors as appropriate organizational structure, planning for and training human force, setting regulations for tourism and raising capital. To gain a stable development in tourism industry, there is a crucial need of a synthesized management and coordination between state and private sector. The extensive growth of tourism in the late 1960s stressed a need planning (Saarinen, 2008). Eco tourism ventures should in theory, try to empower local communities. This empowerment can occur in a variety of ways, such as actively participating in the ecotourism process, maintaining control over the ecotourism venture and creating an experience where there are culturally appropriate decision making mechanisms (Zanotti, 2008). In Spain, rural houses were developed as a strategy for the survival of small family farms and today they play an important role in the social and economic development of rural destinations (Isabel, 2009). The four ways in which tourism can generate local income are wages from direct or formal employment, earnings from selling goods and services or labor, profits from locally owned enterprises and collective income through community owned enterprises (Ashley et al., 2000). If tourism development is managed correctly, there is a potential for employment and income generating opportunities to reach local community. This is especially important because isolated rural communities in particular may have few other economic opportunities and the arrival of locally based work could, therefore, reduce rural- to- urban migration, which in turn could help to strengthen traditional village communities (Tresilian, 2006). In order to improve employment opportunities for local communities there is, therefore, a need to better understand effective approaches to improving capacity within the local community. Tourism industry is highly labor incentive, employing high numbers of low skilled and unskilled employees. The international labor organization (ILO, 2001) estimates that wages are at least 20 percent lower than in other service industries, and jobs are often typified by relatively poor working condition Meyer, 2008). The provision and availability of good quality, independent carrier advice for young people, whilst in compulsory and post education or training, is crucial to enabling them to make sound choices about their future. The following figure shows real barrier of rural employment in tourism industry.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Out of 120 a total of 98 usable questionnaires were used for final analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to profile the respondents. Moreover, ANOVA was employed to test the relationships among demographic characteristics and intentions to be employed in tourism related jobs.

Friedman's ranked mean analysis has been used to identify barriers and their detailed factors for employment in tourism related jobs.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Among 92 GN divisions of Northern Province, 10 were selected categorizing these GN divisions into three groups considering their location. They were; 02GN divisions near to main city,

06 divisions in Villages and 02 divisions in sub cities. Moreover, 100 respondents were surveyed from selected GN divisions as 21 percent from near to main city, 61 percent from villages and 18 percent respondents from sub cities. Among them, 47 percent were male respondents and 53 percent were females. Most respondents were in the age group of 25-35. Another major age group lay in 16-25 and in 35-45. As to the civil status, there were 47 percent married respondents and 53 percent single respondents. Further, when it comes to religion, 50 percent were Buddhists and both Islam and Hindu recorded 25 percent by each. As to the education background, majority have obtained ordinary and advanced level qualifications. Low remunerated category represented 56 percent and 44 percent were job seekers. Judging from income, 46 percent respondents has been recorded under 0 level incomes which was represented by job seekers. Another major category recorded in the survey was under the income groups 5000-10000 and 10000-15000.

ANALYSIS OF DEMOGRAPHY AND THE WORK INTENTION IN TOURISM INDUSTRY

The demographic profile of the respondents was further analyzed with the support of hypothesis testing with one way ANOVA. A detailed analysis with test of hypothesis was carry out in order to see the relationships among demographic characteristics of respondents and the work intention in the tourism industry. The following section discusses the analytical results of the above analysis.

GENDER AND WORK INTENTION

H₀: There is no difference between gender and the work intention in tourism industry

H₁: There is a difference between gender and the work intention in tourism industry

According to the results of ANOVA the null hypothesis is rejected at Alpha 0.05 (Sig 0.000, levene statistic 0.211) and it could be stated that, there is a difference between gender and the work intention in tourism industry.

Age Work intention

H₀: There is no difference between age and the work intention in tourism industry

H₁: There is a difference between age and the work intention in tourism industry

It is statistically significant alpha at 0.05 (Sig. 0.007, levene statistics 0.296) that there is no difference between age and the work intention in tourism industry. Hence the null hypothesis could be rejected and stated that there is a significant difference between age groups and intention to be employed in tourism industry.

CIVIL STATUS AND WORK INTENTION

H₀: There is no difference between civil status and the work intention in tourism industry

H₁: There is a difference between civil status and the work intention in tourism industry

The civil status and the intention to be employed in tourism industry have no significant difference according to the test results and alpha 0.052 (levene statistics 0.708) Hence the null hypothesis is accepted and could be stated that whether married or unmarried, people intended to be employed in tourism industry.

RELIGION AND WORK INTENTION

H₀: There is no difference between Religion and the work intention in tourism industry

H₁: There is a difference between Religion and the work intention in tourism industry

The religion of the respondent and the intention to be employed in tourism industry has no significant difference according to the test results and alpha 0.235 (levene statistics 0.235) Hence the null hypothesis is accepted and could be stated that people intended to be employed in tourism industry irrespective of their religion.

CATEGORY OF THE PERSON AND WORK INTENTION

H₀: There is no difference between Category and the work intention in tourism industry

H₁: There is a difference between Category and the work intention in tourism industry

The category of the person, whether employed, under employed or unemployed were tested to see the significance of difference between the intentions to work in the tourism industry. The test results were significant at alpha 0.05 levels (0.002, levene statistics 0.621) and null hypothesis of there is no difference between Category and the work intention in tourism industry could be rejected. Further it could be declare that the category of the person and intention to be employed in tourism industry was significantly difference.

MONTHLY INCOME OF THE PERSON AND WORK INTENTION

H₀: There is no difference between monthly income and the work intention in tourism industry

H₁: There is a difference between monthly income and the work intention in tourism industry

The hypothesis testing results supported the rejection of null hypothesis that there is no difference between monthly income and the work intention in tourism industry at alpha 0.05 (0.007, levene statistics 0.864) and it is accepted that the income level of the person and the intentions of tourism employment were significantly different.

EDUCATION OF THE PERSON AND WORK INTENTION

H₀: There is no difference between education and the work intention in tourism industry

H₁: There is a difference between education and the work intention in tourism industry

It was revealed that the statistical evidence is sufficient to reject the null hypothesis of there is no difference between education and the work intention in tourism industry at alpha 0.005 (0.004, levene statistics 0.488). Hence it could be stated that the level of education of the person and the intention to be employed are significantly different.

MAIN BARRIERS FOR EMPLOYMENT IN TOURISM INDUSTRY

In order to examine the main barriers for the employment in tourism industry six main variables were identified during the literature review. To further this examination the Friedman's ranking mean analysis has been performed with the ranked data and the following tables illustrate the analytical results highlighting the level of significance of each variable as a barrier for employment in tourism industry.

Accordingly, social considerations (1.46) have become the main barrier followed by availability of infrastructure (2.24) and recruitment process (2.99). Progression pathways (5.38) and skills

Developments (5.16) have less impact as a barrier for employment in tourism industry according to the ranked mean values. Further the significance level of the test statistics less than 0.05 testifies the statistical significance of results.

DETAILS	MEAN RANK
Social considerations	1.46
Recruitment process	2.99
Skills development	5.16
Cultural influences	3.77
Progression pathways	5.38
Availability of infrastructure	2.24

DETAILED ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The following table illustrates the Friedman's ranked mean test results for social considerations for the employment of tourism industry. Accordingly, disparities between expectations have been of highest barrier (2.85) followed by organizational interests (3.66) and availability of other jobs (3.67). Further, the results illustrate that educational level (4.55) and social level (5.06) were of less effective as barriers for employment in tourism industry.

DETAILS	MEAN RANK
Disparities between expectations	2.86
Social level	5.06
Educational level	4.55
Availability of other jobs	3.67
Gender	4.11
N	100
Chi-Square	81.851
Df	6

The significance of recruitment process was analyzed with ranking mean as a barrier for being employed in tourism industry and it is shown in the following table that distance and access is of significant barrier (2.21). Moreover, interest in tourism related employment (3.29) too is a barrier for employment followed by advertising (3.34). Contrarily, entry requirements (3.84) and migration from the area (4.82) were of less significant barriers for employment in tourism sector.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

The following results of Friedman's mean rank analysis reveal that level of understanding (2.03), training on job (2.14) were of significant barriers for employment while orientation (4.42) and interest in career path (3.25) is of less significant as barriers for employment in tourism sector.

CULTURAL INFLUENCES

Cultural influences for employment in tourism related jobs were main barrier and the detailed analysis of this barrier revealed that religion (1.78), family obligations (1.91) followed by attitudes on tourism industry (2.32) as illustrated in the table below.

PROGRESSION PATHWAYS

Progression pathways being an important factor for employment in an industry, language ability (1.80) and personnel contacts with management (2.33) were of significant barriers for employment while working performance and satisfaction on job were of less significant barriers.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Demographic factors such as Gender, Age, Category of the Person, Monthly income of the Person and Education of the Person showed significant difference between and Work Intentions in tourism related jobs. Social considerations have become the main barrier followed by availability of infrastructure and recruitment process for the employment in tourism industry. Progression pathways and skills development have less impact as barriers for employment in tourism industry according to the ranked mean values. Moreover, among social factors the disparities between expectations have been of highest barrier followed by organizational interests for employment in tourism industry. The distance and access is of significant barrier followed by interest in tourism related employment were among barriers in recruitment process. Among the skills development factors, level of understanding, training on job were of significant barriers for tourism employment. Among cultural related barriers for tourism related jobs religion, family obligations and attitudes on tourism industry were significant. Among progression pathways, language ability and personnel contacts with management were major barriers. Modes of transport and communication facilities are significant barriers for employment in tourism industry. In order to attract potential employees from rural areas towards expanding tourism industry the above barriers need to be addressed. In particular, social considerations such as the disparities between people and the employees and interests need to be stimulated. Cultural related barriers such as attitudes towards tourism related employment among rural communities are recommended to be eliminated. Through awareness programs would serve the above exercise. Language skills are to be sorted through proper education in foreign languages for rural communities. By addressing the above barriers properly the tourism industry will be able to attract target numbers to it while remaining of such issues pave the way to separate rural communities from growing service based industries like tourism.

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