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Journal of Tourism is an academic publication dedicated to exploring and analyzing tourism as a multifaceted global phenomenon. This journal serves as a platform for undergraduates to share insights, research findings, and theoretical discussions on various aspects of tourism. Topics covered include nature tourism, cultural and heritage tourism, sustainable tourism practices, new trends, and promotion strategies of the tourism industry. Through peer-reviewed articles, the Journal of Tourism aims to contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the tourism field, addressing both contemporary challenges and future opportunities in tourism.

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Tourism Club was established for undergraduates who are passionate about travel, exploration, and discovering new cultures, places, and experiences. The club brings together like-minded people to learn more about the world, engage in various travel-related activities, and promote the Tourism and Cultural Resource Management degree program, often emphasizing responsible and sustainable practices.

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Articles

The Untamed Beauty of Jungle Beach Unawatuna	1
Nuwanjala Gamage	
Suggestions to promote Aboriginal tourism	9
M.V.R Fernando	
A Hidden attraction in Matara district.....	21
K.G.S Sithiji Nimthara	
An alluring destination, Mirissa captivates the attention of tourists with its beauty	31
W.R.U.Fernando	
Galle Fort as a Tourist place	39
Tarusha Madhawa	
A Hidden Destination “Muthurajawela” Marsh.....	49
K.A.E.K.D.Loshini Perera	
2023: A Year in Review for Over-tourism	53
Thirsha Abeysekare	
The Potential of Sri Lanka's Ayurvedic Tradition as a Driver of Wellness Tourism: A Holistic Approach to Wellbeing	61
Gayathri Lakshika	
The wonder of the world that surprised tourists around the world.....	71
Chamudi Dissanayake	
The Emergence of Dark Tourism	75
W.M.H.T.P. Ilukpitiya	
Promotion of Lotus Tower as a major adventure tourist attraction in Western Province	81
Yashodhi Gunasekara	

Editorial Note

Journal of Tourism is a peer-reviewed journal dedicated to undergraduates who have made a remarkable contribution to the field of Tourism and Cultural Resource Management. The objectives of this journal are to Encourage undergraduates to engage in original research related to tourism, fostering critical thinking and analytical skills, provide a platform for sharing insights, research findings, and innovative ideas in the field of tourism, contributing to the broader academic community and offer students the opportunity to develop their academic writing, editing, and publishing skills through the process of submitting and revising papers. On behalf of the Journal of Tourism, our editorial board, we are proud to hereby present the outline that directs you to nature tourism, cultural and heritage tourism, sustainable tourism practices, new trends, and promotion strategies of the tourism industry.

The editorial team consisting of review editors with various responsibilities is involved in the entire process starting from the submission to the ultimate approval. The complete review process is mindfully constituted to prevent the possibility of prejudice, and the journal is currently an open-access journal for online readers.

We are extremely thankful to the Journal of Tourism, editors who have assumed responsibilities of the Journal as well as the readers and contributors for making this Journal of Tourism a great success.

Editors-in-chief

The Untamed Beauty of Jungle Beach Unawatuna

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Abstract

Unawatuna Jungle Beach is in a very attractive geographical environment adjacent to Rumassala mountain pass in the Unawatuna area Galle district, Southern Province in Sri Lanka. It is today an extremely popular place among local and foreign tourists. Although the jungle shores are quite difficult to reach, they offer a better experience to the adventure traveler. Also, these jungle beaches, facing a natural forest, are a perfect destination for tourists who love to nature tourism. This popular beach which is home to many activities including hiking, fishing, snorkeling, whale watching and boating is one of the attractive tourist destinations in Sri Lanka which consists of 5A. According to CNN, this jungle beach was included in the list of 100 best beaches in the world in 2017.

Introduction

Unawatuna Jungle Beach is a scenic Beach located in a very attractive geographical environment adjacent to the Rumassala Hills in the Galle District, Southern Province of Sri Lanka. Today, this Beach has become one of the most popular Beaches among local and foreign tourists. One of the most secluded Beaches in the Southern Province, Jungle Beach is a beautiful stretch of golden sands, facing Mount Rumassala on one side. With these stunning sights and spectacular views, tourists who visit here are constantly reminded that they are in Paradise. This coastal region is rich in biodiversity and is home to a variety of birds, mammals, reptiles, various flora, and plants that are endemic and rare to Sri Lanka. Today, with the rapid rise of social media, Jungle Beach can be known as a tourist destination that has been talked about around the world. According to CNN, Jungle Beach has been listed among the 100 best beaches in the world in 2013. As of 2017, it has been listed at the 79th position among the 100 best beaches (100 Best Beaches around the World, 2017). Because of this, Jungle Beach can be called one of the most popular beach areas in Sri Lanka, which attracts the most tourists from local and foreign.



Figure 01: Jungle Beach, Unawatuna

Nearby Jungle Beach Attractions

Rumassala Peace Pagoda



Figure 02: Japanese Peace Pagoda

On the way to Jungle Beach, one can visit this attractive pagoda located at a high altitude on Rumassala Hill. It was built in 2005 by Mahayana monks as part of a plan to build peace temples in conflict zones (At that time, the LTTE war was raging in Sri Lanka.)

(Rumassala Peace Pagoda, 2017).

If travelers who come to visit the jungle beach can walk a few kilometers further, they have the chance of seeing the Japanese Peace Temple, which is also very attractive.

Location: Unawatuna

Timings: 07.00 a.m. to 09.00 p.m.

Entry Fee: Free

Lighthouse

The Galle Lighthouse is a UNESCO World Heritage site and is a well-known tourist attraction in Galle. The lighthouse was first lit in the year 1939. It is maintained by the Sri Lanka Ports Authority and is the oldest light station in Sri Lanka (Galle Lighthouse, 2022).



Figure 03: Galle Lighthouse

This can be pointed out as another attractive place for tourists visiting Galle city. If visiting Galle Fort, this is a must-see place for the visitors. If you want to climb to the top of the lighthouse, be sure to get permission from the relevant authorities.

Location: Galle Fort

Timings: 24 hours, all weekdays

Galle Fort



Figure 04: Galle Fort

Galle Fort can be pointed out as another unique tourist attraction located in Galle city. A fort that demonstrates the interplay between European architecture and South Asian traditions. This is a place named as a UNESCO World Heritage Site (Reddottours, 2023). So, this can be called a unique attractive place that tourists visiting Galle City can visit.

Location: Galle town, Sri Lanka

Sea Turtle Hatchery



Figure 05: Sea Turtle Hatchery, Mahamodara

Sea turtle breeding centers are maintained in some places in Sri Lanka. One such place is in Mahamodara, Galle. Here turtles in need of medicinal care and who are pregnant, in fact, they even help the sea turtle breed. And turtle breeding is done in these places. Taking care of turtle eggs and creating a safe environment for them is also done (Mahamodara Sea Turtle Hatchery, 2020).

Location: Mahamodara Sea Turtle Hatchery Centre, Galle Colombo - Galle Main Road, Galle

Timings: 08.00 a.m. to 06.00 p.m.

Accessibilities

Entering Galle city, about 5 km towards Matara, after the Pinnaduwa Interchange, you will see a Cement factory about 200 meters away, and in front of it, the road leading to Rumassala begins. There are two locations where someone mentions Jungle Beach.

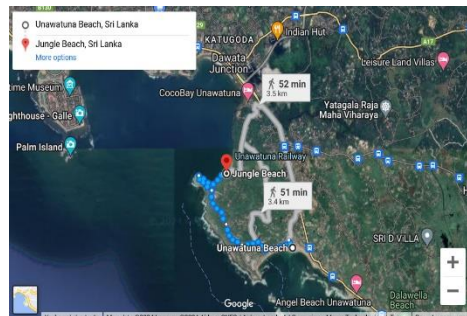


Figure 06: Location in Jungle Beach

When arriving from Galle through the Rumassala jungle area, the First Jungle Beach Car Park and location are often visited.

The next location is the Jungle Beach area next to the Japanese Peace Pagoda. Compared to Beach #1, the #2 beach is less popular, making it less crowded and private.

Compared to other Beaches, this Beach is not easy to visit. To access this Beach, you must hike Mount Rumassala and go through a jungle or reach it by boat. Navigating on Google Maps is not helpful to reach this place. Because there are other Beaches called Jungle Beaches in Sri Lanka, it is difficult to find the way through Google Maps. It takes about 15 minutes to reach Jungle Beach from Galle City, and if you are a tourist or don't have a vehicle, it is cheaper to use transport services like Uber/Pick Me (Jungle Beach – Best Hidden Beach in Unawatuna, 2023).

If you are walking to visit Jungle Beach, you can see the Japanese Peace Temple after a few kilometers. This is a temple located at a very high altitude in the Rumassala mountain range. Due to the amazing geographical location of this jungle Beach, this place is the most popular place for Beach tourism as well as adventure tourism. With the rise of Instagram and social media, this place has become more popular. With the trending hashtags and the filter-loaded images, all visitors to Jungle Beach become instant Ambassadors to this amazing Beach. But this Beach is quite difficult to reach for the elderly or disabled people.

Accommodations

When considering the accommodation facilities around Galle and Jungle Beach, there is a wide range of accommodation available from homestays to luxury hotels to suit the needs and budgets of tourists. Therefore, tourists can spend a day or a few days in this place and Galle city as needed.

Activities

Unawatuna Jungle Beach with its beautiful and serene environment is isolated from the city making it an ideal place for tourists who want to spend their leisure time.



Figure 07: Scuba diving in Unawatuna

There are sunbeds available for visitors to sit back and chill by the Beach. As well as the Rumassala Sanctuary is a paradise for every nature lover, which is rich in many different species of rare plants, medicinal herbs, and exotic birds.

The place also attracts tourists due to the mythological significance of the epic 'Ramayana' which marks the rescue of Princess Sita by Lord Ram. Jungle Beach is perfect for sunbathing, whale watching, hiking, boating, fishing, snorkeling, and scuba diving.



Figure 08: Boat riding in Unawatuna

The equipment needed for all these activities can be rented near this place, so tourists can experience these activities without difficulty on this Beach.

The Beach hosts Beach parties from sunset to sunrise one day a week (mostly on Wednesdays) where visitors of all ages can enjoy the music and have fun. Also, the restaurants on and around this Beach can taste a variety of dishes, especially a wide range of seafood such as shrimp, and squid, as well as local cuisine (Jungle Beach, Unawatuna).

Amenities

In this destination, all the facilities needed by tourists are provided, especially sanitary facilities, restaurants, grocery stores, cafes, emergency services, sports equipment, transportation facilities, etc., and are equipped with many facilities. As well as this place also has facilities available to tourists such as wellness centers, yoga centers, spas, etc. Tourists can get the necessary facilities under an experienced staff as required in this place. Therefore, this jungle Beach can be called a destination with many facilities. Due to all these factors, this jungle Beach has become a paradise for many tourists and nature lovers.

Conclusion

Jungle Beach is one of the most popular beaches in Sri Lanka with 5As. At present, this jungle beach is a popular tourist attraction that attracts a lot of tourists, local and international. These jungle beaches, which offer a variety of activities, are a special place that is the most talked about on social media today. As well as beach tourism, which is a popular concept of tourism in Sri Lanka, this jungle beach can be shown as a tourist destination that can promote tourism concepts such as nature tourism and adventure tourism. So, Jungle Beach is truly one of the most unique beaches in Sri Lanka, like a paradise on earth. So, you who travel here,

"Take memories, Leave only footprints."

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Aborigines in Sri Lanka

Suggestions to promote Aboriginal tourism

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Abstract

This article explores the intricate aspects of promoting Aboriginal tourism in Sri Lanka, with a specific focus on the Vedda people. It begins by defining tourism and introducing cultural travel, subsequently delving into the history, lifestyle, and challenges faced by the Vedda, the indigenous population of Sri Lanka. The narrative continues to explore the cultural, musical, and dance aspects of Aboriginal societies, emphasizing the decline in the Vedda population and their adaptation to modern society.

Also, this article provides a comprehensive set of suggestions to promote Aboriginal tourism, encompassing cultural preservation, ecotourism, educational programs, infrastructure development, and job creation for Indigenous people. Recommendations include cultural exchange programs, workshops, and festivals, the development of eco-friendly practices, awareness campaigns, infrastructure improvements, access to information, heritage centers, and the creation of job opportunities.

The article underscores the multifaceted benefits of promoting Aboriginal tourism, such as the preservation of cultural heritage, economic development, and sustainable practices. It emphasizes the need for a sensitive and respectful approach to ensure the success and longevity of Indigenous tourism initiatives in Sri Lanka.

Introduction

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defines tourism as people “traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment” for leisure, business, or other purposes. For travel to qualify as tourism under this definition, it must last more than 24 hours and not last more than one year. Tourism is a speeded activity from a global perspective. In the past, people traveled for curiosity, leisure, relaxation, religious and business purposes, and today they travel for needs that go beyond those reasons. One such form of travel is cultural travel. The tourist is engaged in cultural travel to experience and gain experience about the cultures, traditions, behaviors, and customs of each country. Aboriginal tourism can be introduced as one form of subcultural migration in cultural migration.

Aboriginal tourism is an experience or inquiry into a particular human society. The study of the ancient people, the indigenous people who mainly live in a certain country, can be introduced as Aboriginal tourism. Through this article, it is hoped to discuss Aboriginal tourism, the history and life of the Aborigines living in Sri Lanka, and the suggestions that can be made to promote Aboriginal tourism in Sri Lanka.

Aborigines of Sri Lanka

It is extremely difficult to find information about the lives of the indigenous people in Sri Lanka. Several different opinions have been put forward regarding the birth of the aborigines. According to the Mahavamsa, the aborigines are descended from Kuveni's two sons, Digahaththa and Disala. According to Seligman, there has been a group of people in Sri Lanka who can be identified as aborigines (adivasis) even before Vijaya came here. In any way, it can be said that the birth of aborigines took place in the Sri Lankan society in the past.

The indigenous people living in the Sri Lankan Indigenous society are known as “**Vedda**”. The name Vedda is not a name created by the Aborigine society. The Western nations that invaded Ceylon used the name Vedda to refer to these indigenous people. According to history, indigenous people have been living in the Sabaragamuwa region of Sri Lanka. Sabaragamuwa is described as the village of hunters. It is said that when the Dutch came to Sri Lanka, there were Veddas in all areas (Rathnapala, 2002).

Taking the cultural history of Sri Lanka in the past, the people who lived in this country at that time traveled from place to place, hunted, and made weapons for their livelihood. They are known as the oldest ethnic group in Sri Lanka. Through the conclusions of some kind of sociological and genetic research, it is revealed from the information related to history that the “Vedda” people-maintained relations with the oldest population group living in Sri Lanka at that time. Within those social groups, there were special social, economic, and cultural characteristics that were unique to them. Through them, there is a possibility to attract some development in the field of

tourism. It is said that there were three types of indigenous people in Sri Lanka in the early days (Seligmann & Seligmann, 1911).

Forest Vedda: The Vedda who lived in the forest in the tribal community is called by this name. Nowadays, the forested Vedda have been transformed to live their lives in villages. They live in inter-relationships with the villages near the forests.

Village Vedda: This is the name given to the aboriginal population which has been adapted partly to hunting and partly agricultural life near the village level.

Coastal Vedda: This generation of Vedda lives near the seas. They have changed in physical characteristics to the extent that it is difficult to identify them nowadays. The reason is that they are mixed with other people on the coast.

Examples: These aborigines can be seen near the east coast north of Batticaloa.

According to Robert Knox, there are two types of Veddas in Sri Lanka (Knox, 1817). They are called Wild Veddas (“Wal veddas”) and Village Veddas. Wild Veddas will never meet Sinhalese society. But it is said that villagers usually have contact with people.

Example: Robert Knox mentions the Vedda people living in the village of “Kukulewa” on the road from Anuradhapura to Trincomalee at the “Magicchawa” junction and entering the forest.

Anthropologists refer to the Vedda people as a mixture of Negro, Australoid, and Mediterranean human divisions. When a Vedda and an ordinary Sinhalese are in the same place, they can be easily identified. It is based on the physical differences between them.

The life of the Veddas today is somewhat more complex than the life of the ancient Veddas. Their unconscious adaptation to the surrounding society has led to this

complexity. They have lived a simple life by hunting leaves and tree leaves for clothing and eating meat. But nowadays the Veddas do not have opportunities to live life so simply.

The Veddas who live in the forest make their houses in a very simple way. Those houses are very small. The size of a house is about 10-12 feet long and 7-8 feet wide and the roof of the house is covered with materials like “ilk” and “mana”. Often a house has only two rooms. There is no valuable furniture made of wood in old houses. Arrows and axes can be found in any house. These items reflect the identity of an aborigine to be recognized as a Vedda.

Today's aboriginal women also use cloth as tops. Most aboriginal men make their clothes by wrapping a piece of cloth around their waist. It is a custom of the Veddas to carry the ax on their shoulder while traveling. They consider the ax as a part of the dress.

About the food of the Veddas, most of the things grown in farming are taken for food by the Veddas. Although it is customary for the Veddas to hunt and eat animals, they never eat the meat of domesticated animals such as cows and chickens. Animals such as oxen, deer, and wild boar roaming freely in the forest are killed and fished. The meat is dried and kept in honey and is an extremely delicious food for people.

Veddas make a boat from a log cut from a tree and put honey in it and put meat in it. It can be introduced as a method used to preserve meat since ancient times. Apart from that, kurahan paste, corn, etc. are among the foods of the Veddas.

When we examine the Veddas of Sri Lanka, they are a part of the indigenous people of this country, and they are still living among us, protecting their identity to some extent. But it should be mentioned that due to the transformation that is taking place now, they will soon become extinct in this country. At present, the prevalence of Veda people seems to be decreasing. In 1921, the number of Veddas was 4519 and by 1940, it had come down to 2361. By 1953, the number of Veddas in Sri Lanka was about

803, and it is concluded that it has decreased to more than half today. One of the reasons for the extinction of the Veddas is the urbanization of their original settlement areas. The mixing of the Veddas with other races is also a reason for their decrease in numbers and the modern generations of the Veddas have left the Vedda life and entered the villages and started living like ordinary Sinhalese people.



Figure 01: Sri Lankan Aborigines

Aborigines and their Tourism

The Aborigines lead their lives in their folk society showing traditional, simple, architectural features. Even today, their social and cultural characteristics have survived. Also, the indigenous cultural characteristics shown through the traditional behavioral pattern inspire the tourists about Aboriginal tourism. This traditional behavior is important for the traveling traveler in modern society. Demonstrating ancient characteristics is of great value in learning about the tourism industry.

There are tourist spots in Sri Lanka that can improve the tourism background of the native people in the society by providing tourist attractions. “Dambana” is a village that can be taken as a tourism product. Indigenous or indigenous peoples live there. They lead their lives in the “Dambana” area by maintaining contact with nature in some way. They who live in the village clash with the fauna and flora and point them

out as factors that attract tourists. Also, settlements of tribal groups are a reason for tourist attractions. Accordingly, the settlements of the Vedda people are built on a very simple traditional level. The architecture of the aborigines creates a very good backdrop for attracting international tourists (Rathnapala, 2002).

Local tourists as well as international tourists are more interested in getting an understanding of the history of this people's society in Sri Lanka. Tourists are encouraged to study the existence of a simple life, how traditional people's society contrasts with modern society, etc.

Different social groups in the world have their own music and dance arts. Aboriginal tourism has its music and dance. Music and dance with those characteristics cannot be seen in any other part of Sri Lanka. They are engaged in singing songs, singing “Darunalavili” etc. using musical instruments peculiar to their musical art.



Figure 02: Adivasis performing the "kirikoraha" dance

As far as dance is concerned, the “Kirikorah” dance has a prominent place in Vedda’s society, where Kirikorah dances are performed to develop prosperity.

When performing dances, at the same time coconut is pressed and rice is cooked in it and it is presented in the form of a dance in the form of the “Kirikorah” dance. To highlight the features of Vedda’s society, the designers have worked to include them in the videos created in modern society.

The indigenous peoples have their distinct cultural society. In that cultural society, the generally advanced people and the primitive tribal people can see many different religious ideologies, traditions, customs, and beliefs. Among the aborigines of

Australia and the primitive people living on the island of Bali, they have their own religious beliefs and dances that are special to them. Among the Veddas of Sri Lanka there is a set of religious beliefs that are special to them. These are inherited by the tribals. Belief in demons is a major religious tenet among the Veddas. The Veddas firmly believe that as soon as any member of their lineage dies, he will be reborn as a devil. One of the purposes of the peace rituals performed by the Veddas is to please the deceased relative by performing sacrifices and offering merit to him. Offering to gods and goddesses is another religious practice among the Veddas. Among the forest deities offered by the Veddas, the god Saman occupies a central place. The Veda people believe that by making offerings to the gods, they are happy and act to protect themselves and their area.

Food culture can be introduced as a characteristic of other indigenous people groups that tourists may see while traveling from country to country. There is a food pattern peculiar to those indigenous people groups. If you consider the food culture of local tours in Sri Lanka, you can see many types of food and drinks inherited by them. Honey, meat, and vegetables are among them. In circulation as a tourist, it is mainly to enjoy all its experiences in the environment. This is why it is important to gain experience with the diet while visiting the local community.

Tourists love not only to see with their own eyes but also to talk and see the stories inherent in that social system. Tourists are interested in talking and exchanging ideas with the Vedda people because of their unique language and manners.

Example: In Australia, tourists can interact with Aboriginal people.

Chena cultivation creates a tourist attraction in local tourism which is agricultural activities including farming. If you go to the Dambana area, you can see that the Veddas living there have done farming activities around their houses. Even among local tourists there is more interest in knowing about the farming methods of veddas. Tourists in modern society prefer to visit farmlands to experience them.

Vedda people's burial ground can be mentioned as another tourist attraction that can be seen in the local modes of transportation. Tourists do not forget to come to Dambana to see the many generations-old burial grounds in the Dambana area of Sri Lanka. The graves of Vannilattan's father, the current tribal leader, are also located in that village. Promotion of the tourism sector takes place through the tourist's attraction to the ecological zones where local people groups live. At present, the people of the local community themselves act as guides for the tourists. There, they work to give the tourists an understanding of certain things by gaining an understanding of the language of the tourists. It enables tourists to know the differences and special features of the language.

After a native visit, it is possible to purchase indigenously designed souvenirs to commemorate the visit.

Examples: Arrows made of wood, Necklaces made of nuts found in the forest, and Jewelry such as rings.

Also, the small museums built around the Adivasi village are important to get some understanding of the Adivasis. It enables a comprehensive study of local history, economy, social condition, etc. It can be taken as a tourist attraction and development of the tourism sector can be done.

Suggestions to promote Aboriginal Tourism

The indigenous communities of Sri Lanka, including the Veddas, are the original inhabitants of the island. To preserve their traditions and improve their livelihoods, aboriginal tourism can be a valuable avenue. The primary objectives of this proposal are to preserve cultural heritage, generate economic opportunities, and promote responsible tourism. Sri Lanka's indigenous communities have unique cultural, historical, and natural heritage that can be leveraged for sustainable tourism development. The proposal outlines a comprehensive plan to promote aboriginal tourism that will benefit local communities as well as the country's tourism sector.

- **Cultural preservation and promotion:** In Aboriginal tourism, there is an opportunity to learn about the Aboriginal society, where there is great cultural value, to learn about their culture. Accordingly, cultural exchange programs, workshops, and cultural events for tourists traveling around tribal villages are measures that can be used to promote tribal tourism. Tourists can connect with indigenous communities to learn about traditions and participate in their daily activities. These cultural exchange programs can be conducted live. Through it, the tourists will be able to provide a new experience and promote Aboriginal tourism.

Examples: Developing centers in indigenous areas where tourists can learn about traditional crafts, music, dance, and rituals.

Organizing workshops and exhibitions to showcase Aboriginal art forms, cuisine, and customs.

- **Ecotourism and building sustainable practices:** Aborigines can be introduced as a group of people who work closely with the environment. Most of them still live in the forest today and it is important to work in an environmentally friendly manner in the promotion of the tourism industry. Especially among the Veddas, the forest-dwelling Veddas consider the environment a part of their people's lives. Their habitats, food, etc. are all things obtained from the environment. Therefore, another action that can be taken in the promotion of Aboriginal tourism is the creation of eco-tourism and related sustainable practices.

Aborigine communities can work together to protect native flora and fauna through wildlife conservation. There, as the indigenous people work closely with the environment, there is an opportunity to share knowledge with visiting tourists about some different plant species. Also, Ayurvedic medicine methods, chemical methods, etc. can be maintained in these villages as eco-tourism businesses.

Eco-friendly shelters and lodges can be built in tribal areas to ensure minimum environmental impact. Here, tourists can be given a new experience by constructing accommodation facilities using raw materials such as clay, “ilk”, “mana”, and

coconut branches, which are used by the Veddas to build their dwellings. Getting accommodation in mud houses is a different experience for people living in the suburbs.

- **Conducting educational programs and creating awareness:** It is important to conduct educational or awareness programs for visiting tourists if they want to gain some knowledge about the indigenous people. In the study of these indigenous people living in a country, their culture, language, traditions, etc. are all different from the larger society. Due to these changes, many people are conducting research on indigenous peoples. Tourists choose tribal villages as their tourist destinations to gain some knowledge and education. Therefore, in the promotion of Aboriginal tourism, it can be presented as an important proposal to hold educational programs and awareness programs for visiting tourists.

Cultural exchange programs between Aboriginal youth and tourists should be encouraged. By allowing visiting tourists to spend days with the indigenous people, they can live with the indigenous people, engage in agricultural activities, and experience the cuisine.

- **Infrastructure development:** Under this, the development of access roads, transport facilities, and sanitation facilities to the tribal villages can be pointed out. Tourists who come for navigation must have easy access routes to reach their destination to achieve their purpose. Properly maintained and developed highways should be available and means of transport should be available to reach the destination easily. Currently, public transport services as well as private transport services transport tourists to tribal villages.

The availability of sanitary facilities for the use of visiting tourists is an important aspect of Aboriginal tourism. Especially if the sanitation works are in poor condition, it makes tourists uncomfortable.

- **Facilitating access to information:** It is important to provide the necessary facilities to the people who investigate and explore the indigenous people as well as the tourists who come to share their experiences with them. It is important to build and maintain information centers in the vicinity of Adivasi villages for school children, university students, or any other person to get information about Adivasi if they need it for their education. In connection with that, employing people with knowledge about indigenous people, distributing or making books, magazines, pamphlets containing information about indigenous people, etc. can be done.
- **Developing the use of technical strategies:** Today's world often deals with technology. Therefore, technology can also be used to promote indigenous mobility. Local as well as foreign tourists need to use technological means to get information about their destination. For this, it is important to employ people with knowledge of technology. Adivasi tourism websites and active social media can be introduced to promote Adivasi tourism. A ticket should be issued to the tourists traveling in the vicinity of Adivasi villages and the ticket should be purchased at the destination as well as online.
- **Establishment of Heritage Centers:** Aborigines today are quite different from the Aborigines who lived in ancient times. The tools, ornaments, and clothing used by them have changed and blended with modern society. Because of this, their social culture has been destroyed and it will be difficult for future generations to find out whether there was an indigenous population in Sri Lanka. Therefore, to preserve the ancient heritage of the Veddas, heritage centers and museums should be built in the vicinity of their villages. Through that, it becomes possible to gain knowledge about the indigenous people, preserve their heritage, and get an education. Aborigines carried the bow and ax throughout their lives. It is for their protection, hunting, etc. But today, if a tourist visits the Veddas generation, he cannot see that the tools used by them in ancient times are used in the modern life of the people. Because of this, a museum can be set up for tourists to understand the equipment they used in the past.

- **Creating jobs for Indigenous people:** direct or indirect employment opportunities can be created to promote Aboriginal tourism. Here some training or knowledge should be given to the veddas. Since ancient times, the veddas have been skilled in creating various handicrafts. These jobs can be created by crafting weapons, jewelry, and producing their foods. Veddas can earn some income by making the visiting tourists buy such things that are designed or produced by the Veddas.

conclusion

Promoting aboriginal tourism in Sri Lanka can be a culturally rich and sustainable endeavor that benefits local communities and the tourism industry. These are some of the key points to be considered while working to promote aboriginal tourism in Sri Lanka. They can be mentioned as above and through those proposals, a more sustainable tribal movement can be maintained in the tribal villages. Finally, promoting indigenous tourism in Sri Lanka is a winning proposition. It allows for the preservation of unique cultural heritage, creates economic development, attracts tourists, fosters intercultural understanding, and promotes sustainable practices. However, it must be approached with sensitivity and respect for the traditions and rights of indigenous communities to ensure its success and sustainability.

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A Hidden attraction in Matara district

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Abstract

Matara Star Fort, an iconic military stronghold nestled in the heart of Matara, Sri Lanka, is a testament to the island's rich history and strategic significance. This abstract provides a glimpse into the architectural marvel that is Matara Star Fort, delving into its historical context, unique design features, and cultural importance. Matara Star Fort serves as a living testament to the resilience of Sri Lanka's heritage, bridging the past with the present. As a symbol of endurance and adaptability, the fort stands proudly, inviting visitors to unravel the layers of its storied past and appreciate its timeless grandeur.

Introduction

This report aims to provide local and foreign tourists with a short guide to an 18th-century monument known as Star Fort (Matara Tharaka Kotuwa), built in 1763 during the Dutch colonial occupation of Sri Lankan's Maritime provinces. It is in the middle of Matara (Southern Province), along the town's main road, and opposite the present-day offices of the municipal council. The name Star represents the shape of the fort, which is designed as six-pointed bastions symmetrically placed. The two main components of the fort are its fortification structure, and a residential unit located at its center. Immediately before being taken over by the Department of Archaeology in the 1980s, the building was used as the public library of the Matara Municipal (then Urban) Council and before then as the residence of the Public Works Department engineer. Over the previous 230 years, however, numerous alterations had been made to the monument, which meant it was in a bad state of repair by this time. Notably, the original residential unit of the fort had been demolished and a modern structure built on top of the elevated ramparts, destroying the character of the original Fort. The Department of Archaeology completely reconstructed the residential unit that we see today in 1986/87. It is thanks to the reconstruction of the monument that we can now experience the Star Fort as it would have been and visit a unique example of the

fortifications that were established in Sri Lanka during the Dutch colonial regime. It is important to note that the Star Fort although small in scale, has many features of the period in Sri Lanka, any large fort built during the Dutch. (Arachchi, 2022)



Figure 01: Matara Star Fort

Location

It is in the middle of the town of Matara, Matara Divisional Secretariat, Southern Province, along the Colombo-Matara main road and opposite the present-day offices of the Municipal Council, and located on the eastern bank of Nilwala River, approximately 350m from the gate to the Matara Fort.



Figure 02: Map of Matara Star Fort

Brief historical overview

Following the Portuguese occupation of Sri Lanka (1505-1656), all the important trading points located in the Maritime provinces of the country were taken over by the Dutch (1656-1796) who built a series of settlements (fortress) secured by defensive forts to protect them from attacks by Sri Lankan rulers and populations and rival European maritime powers. These forts, which numbered more than 35 and varied in size and shape, include the World Heritage Site of Galle Fort. Matara was an important trading center for the Dutch, so they built a settlement with a fortification, traces of which, including its layout and main church, are still visible. The main Dutch fortress was quite simple compared to most others as it was in a naturally occurring peninsula and therefore only required protection from a single mainland side. In 1762, the settlement was re-occupied by the Dutch under the command of Governor Lubber Jan Baron Van Eck, who was responsible for building the Star Fort in 1763, just outside the main fortress, perhaps to defend it against possible future attacks from the mainland. (From Wikipedia, 2020)

In the original plans for the Star Fort, it is named the Redoute Van Eck, a title that is also carved into the main gateway. According to research by William A. Nelson in his book "The Dutch Forts of Sri Lanka-1984" "the name of this 'Redoute Van Eck' is the clue to the real nature of this Star Fort. 'Redoute' stands for redoubt, i.e., a self-contained, independent outwork standing apart from the place it was set up to defend, and perhaps the forerunner of the numerous and much larger forts which a country or so later, were built to ring (for example) Paris, Verdun, Plymouth and Portsmouth'. Ms. Nalanie Rupasinghe in her unpublished dissertation titled 'Star of Matara' submitted to the University of Moratuwa has suggested that the fort was constructed under the supervision of, Jan Hendrik Lappe, the French engineer of the commandant of Galle, who at the time was advised by the captain of engineers, Gillis Bore. It is also recorded that a local foreman known as Orukema Muhandiram oversaw building the fort.

The British occupied the maritime provinces in 1796, and the entire country fell under their rule in 1815. The British rule utilized all the fortifications for various administrative purposes. However, little of the building's history since then has been traced before 1914, when it was visited by Edward R. Ayrton, the British Egyptologist. Having undertaken excavations in Egypt's Valley of Kings, Ayrton had come to Sri Lanka and succeeded H. C. P. Bell as the Commissioner of Archaeology in 1912. He documented his visit to Matara in a brief and succinct note, recording his observation that the original building had been destroyed and replaced with a modern building, constructed perhaps by the district engineer of the Public Works Department. Indeed, this modern building had been rather haphazardly erected on top of the raised terrace of the fort between the ramparts and the residential unit. The original function of this raised terrace on which the modern building appeared had been to enable space to move canons and to keep guard, watching out for enemies approaching. Ayrton suggested removing the later structure (modern building) to regain the original character of the fort. His note reads: 'Went to Star Fort and was shown over by Drieberg, district engineer. This small but almost perfect fort is such a gem that it should certainly be maintained as a showplace. The DE's house (modern building) should be removed completely.'

Despite the recommendation of Ayrton, it appears that this modern building continued to survive under the management of the Public Works Department for many years, until 1941 when the State Council decided to hand over the responsibility for the fort to the Department of Archaeology for proper maintenance which did not materialize. In 1965 the building began to be used by the Urban Council of Matara, as its public library.



Figure 03: Lubbert Jan Van Eck (1719-1765)

Those familiar with the library may recall that it was, at one time, roofed with Cajan (thatch) - the Cajan was later replaced with half-round tiles. In the early 1980s, the building was finally handed over to the Department of Archaeology, which carried out a complete restoration program (1986-88) that brought the monument to its present condition. The drawbridge, which had been lost from the original structure, was constructed in its present form in 2012 by the Department of Archaeology with the assistance of the Dutch authorities. (Archaeological sites in Sri Lanka , Colonial buildings in Sri Lanka , Forts in Sri Lanka , Matara District » Matara Star Fort, 2018)

Museum in Matara Star Fort

Star Fort Museum showcases the architecture and artistry of the South people under the museums designed in the old Dutch fort and how it influenced the life of the people of Southern. The museum mainly consists of two exhibition rooms, room number one shows the architectural history of Matara area, and room number two shows the art history of Matara area. The front part of compartment number one, which is located to the left of the entrance gate, shows the constructions of the colonial period, including Star Fort and Nupe Old Dutch Market. In the middle part, there are religious buildings, public buildings, elite houses, other architectural constructions, photographs, etc. The section in front of compartment number two, located to the right of its main entrance in Star Fort, depicts the following dancing traditions, paintings, etc.

In this section, artifacts such as masks, low country dance costumes, and jewelry, low country temple murals from the Kandy period, stone carvings from the Anuradhapura period, beads, and brass carvings are displayed. The central section depicts Nanaka science and writing art. Hash Embu coins used in Anuradhapura period Swastika coins, Lakshmi coins as well as coins used in the colonial period are also displayed Pottery shards with pre-Brahminical Script, medieval Sinhalese script Panakaduwa copperplate as well as trilingual inscription with Tamil Persian and Chinese characters are also displayed. The rear part of the gallery depicts the foreign influences on the life of the people of Matara. In that part, the weapons used in the

colonial period are displayed as well as the pottery produced in various countries and the British emblem.

In these two exhibition rooms, from the small beads worn by the ancient ancestors to the five-foot-high stone Buddha statue that was worshiped by them, there are many architectural objects on display. As a research institute, Star Fort Museum is an ideal site for school students and university students as well as local and foreign researchers for academic research activities. A publishing house with a valuable academic book collection for the development of the knowledge of future generations also consists of Star Fort Archaeological Museum. By exhibiting our national heritage collected in the museum, we have contributed to the important task of spreading the proud message of Sri Lankan culture to local and foreign visitors. The most valuable piece of archaeological value in this museum is the 4000-year-old human skeleton found in Ethiliya Field-Hungama which represents the prehistoric period. Below are two of the most special antiquities displayed in the museum of Matara Star Fort.

- Pre-historic human skeleton – Manik Hamy

Site: Mine-Ethiliya Field, Hungama, Hambanthota district, Southern Province, Sri Lanka.

Location: 06 07 12 N, 80 56 47 E.

Date: BC 2000 (C14 dating).

Species: Homo Sapience.

The complete human burial was removed from the Mini-Ethiliya shell site as a block within its matrices by Dr, Nimal Perera and the Excavations team of Archaeology Department in 2009, and initially cataloged as skeleton No 6. Since it is a complete skeleton using its location as an identifying factor, it has been Menik Hamy by Dr. Kulathilake giving this prehistory modern human form of Sri Lanka a unique identity. Manik Hamy was laid to rest in a fetal position with his hand to the North and covered with large quantities of shells and stones artifacts within a shallow grave. It is a significant find allowing as to trace the pre-historic lifestyle and affinities of aquatic

foragers who lived along the coastal region of Sri Lanka over 4000BC. (Century 3rd BCE. to 1st CE - Lanka, n.d.)



Figure 04: Prehistoric human skeleton - Manik Hamy

- Panakaduwa Copper Plate Grant

Period: 11th century A.D.

Region: Vijayabahu I (1055-1110 A.D.)

Language: Medieval Sinhala

Script: Medieval Sinhala

Number of plates: 3 copper plates

Length & width: 38 cm & 7 cm

Discovered: 1948, From a paddy field of Panakaduwa village Discovered by: S. Carolis Appuhami.

Panakaduwa Copper Plate Grant (also known as Panakaduwa Thamba Sannasa) is a copper plate charter discovered in the village of Panakaduwa in the Morawak Korale of Matara District, Sri Lanka. This artefact is considered significant as it is the earliest in date of the copper-plate charters so far discovered in the country (Fernando, 1975; Ranawella, 2007). The plates are presently on display in Museum of Matara Star Fort. Discovery The plates were discovered in or about February 1948 by a farmer of

Panakaduwa, S. Carolis Appuhami, while digging in a field called Bogahadeniya for some turf for his field (Fernando, 1990; Ranawella, 2007). As the plates were not made of gold or any other valuable metal, Appuhami had put them aside in his house. But later when he began to fall ill too often, Appuhami thought that it was due to some kind of misfortune of these plates (Fernando, 1990). He handed over them to one of his relatives, a Buddhist monk, and about one year later the plates reached the hands of Senarath Paranavitana, the epigraphist who edited and published it for the first time in the *Epigraphia Zeylanica* Vol. V. published in 1955 (Fernando, 1990; Paranavitana, 1955; Ranawella, 2007)

Content: The inscription records a special grant pronounced by King Vijayabahu I (1055-1110 A.D.) in council from the palace at the Anuradhapura in his 27th regnal year [1082-1083) Fernando, 1975; Nicholas, 1963; Ranawella, 2007]. The grant had been made to the chieftain Ruhunu Dandanayaka Sitnaru-bim Budalnavan (Lord Budal of Sitnaru-bim, Dandanayaka of Ruhuna) for the protection afforded to the king, his father and the other members of the royal family when they were in hiding during the Cola invasion (Nicholas, 1963; Paranavitana, 1955; Prematilaka & Hewage, 2018). The scholar C.E. Godakumbura suspected this document to be a forgery by the sons or grandsons of Budalnavan and assigned it to a date after Vijayabau I (Ranawella, 2007).



Figure 05: Panakaduwa Copper Plate Grant

Conclusion

Steps should be taken to promote the tourism industry on this site. Matara Star Fort is an archaeologically important site that showcases Dutch architecture. Although this site is located in the center of Matara city. It is not a very popular place among both local and foreign tourists. Sometimes even people living in Matara area have not visited this site. Star Fort is also Fort, but this fort is not as large as Matara Fort and Galle Fort. Although this is a small fort. It ranks higher than other forts in Sri Lanka in terms of architecture.

The maintenance of this site is at a very good level, but the promotion of the tourism industry is at a very poor level. Many tourists are not aware that there is a museum run by the Department of Archaeology at this place. The reason for the decrease in the number of tourists visiting this site is because people think that there is nothing to see in this place. But this Star Fort Museum has many valuable antiques, artifacts and so many things where you can get a lot of knowledge about history and archeology in Sri Lanka. The main reason why tourists don't know much about this place is that there is no proper description of the Star Fort Museum on Google. Therefore, the first thing that should be done is to include a clear description of Star Fort and its museum in Google, so that both local and foreign tourists can get an idea and have a desire to visit this site. Matara is an area that is featured by local and foreign tourists.

Therefore, it is important to organize various programs to promote other sites in Matara as well as to promote this Star Fort. It is also important to explain to tourists who come to this place. Also, a ticket should be issued for a reasonable price to foreign tourists as well as local tourists who come to visit Star Fort. Further maintenance of this site attracts tourists. By working in this way, this Star Fort and museum can become a famous tourist destination among local and foreign tourists.

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An alluring destination, Mirissa captivates the attention of tourists with its beauty.

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Abstract

Mirissa, a stunning coastal gem located at the southern tip of Sri Lanka, has emerged as a fascinating destination that attracts tourists with its unmatched beauty. This article explores the fascinating allure of Mirissa, focusing on the unique blend of tranquil beaches, vibrant marine life, and lush landscapes that make it a must-see destination for travelers seeking a tranquil escape.

Introduction

Mirissa's coastal allure is highlighted by its pristine sandy beaches stretching miles along the Indian Ocean. Mirissa is a small town in the Matara district of the Southern Province of Sri Lanka. Mirissa is also the largest fishing port on the southern coast. It is located 150 km south of Colombo and at an elevation of 4 meters (13 ft) above sea level. Located on the south coast of Sri Lanka, Mirissa has emerged as a hidden gem, captivating the hearts of travelers looking for a quiet escape amidst the breathtaking natural beauty. This small coastal town is known for its pristine beaches, vibrant marine life, and relaxing atmosphere, making it the perfect destination for those craving a slice of tropical paradise.



Figure 01: Mirissa

In 1980 the first tourist accommodation was built and in the mid-1990s the city's tourism industry began to grow dramatically. At certain times of the year, the crystal-clear waters offer visitors a unique opportunity to witness the graceful dances of dolphins and the graceful movements of blue whales. Lush coral reefs make Mirissa a haven for snorkelers and divers, providing a close encounter with the underwater world. This tropical haven invites you to embark on a journey through it (MIRISSA Destination Sri Lanka, 2024).



Figure 02: Mirissa Beach

Breathtaking Beaches

Mirissa has some of the most beautiful beaches in Sri Lanka. The golden sands are lapped by the gentle waves of the Indian Ocean, creating a gorgeous backdrop for sun-seekers. The pristine coastline of Mirissa is lined with stunning beaches, each offering its unique appeal and charm.

Mirissa Beach is a beautiful stretch of golden sand lined with palm trees, creating a postcard-perfect tropical setting. The calm and clear waters make it an ideal spot for swimming and snorkeling.



Figure 03: Secret Beach in

As the day wears on, the beach transforms into a vibrant hub of beaches and restaurants where visitors can enjoy delicious seafood while enjoying the stunning sunset.

Although the **Secret Beach** is one of the most beautiful beaches we find in Mirissa. As the name suggests, Secret Beach is a hidden gem waiting to be found. Accessible via a short trek, this secluded location offers a more tranquil atmosphere than Mirissa Beach. The pristine sand and turquoise waters create a private oasis, perfect for those looking to escape the crowds and immerse themselves in the natural beauty of the area.

Although not a traditional beach, Mirissa's **Coconut Hill** is a must-see from an elevated position offering panoramic views of the coastline. With a row of swaying coconut trees gracefully against the backdrop of the Indian Ocean, it is a popular spot for taking stunning photographs, especially at sunrise and sunset.



Figure 04: Coconut Hill in Mirissa

Parrot Rock is a unique rock formation separating Mirissa Beach and Mirissa Port. Adventurous visitors will be able to reach the rock through shallow water and enjoy panoramic views of the surrounding beaches and the vast expanse of the Indian Ocean (digitaltravelcouple.com, 2023).

Mirissa's stunning beaches like these cater to a variety of interests, be it sunbathing, water sports or simply enjoying the natural beauty of the surroundings. With its laid-back vibe and stunning coastal landscapes, Mirissa has rightly earned its place as one of Sri Lanka's top beach destinations.



Figure 05: Parrot rock

Whale Watching Extravaganza



Figure 06: Whale-watching in Mirissa

One of Mirissa's main attractions is its reputation as one of the world's best whale-watching destinations. Between November and April, the waters beyond Mirissa become a playground of majestic marine life, including blue whales, sperm whales, and playful dolphins. Mirissa tour operators offer guided boat trips, providing a thrilling opportunity to witness these majestic creatures in their natural habitats. The beautiful experience of seeing these gentle giants gliding gracefully through the water is a memory that will last a lifetime.

Surfing and Water Activities



Figure 07: Surfing in Mirissa

The combination of stunning scenery makes Mirissa a haven for surfers and water enthusiasts. Mirissa offers a range of surfers suitable for all levels of surfers, from beginners to seasoned experts. The main surf spot in Mirissa is Mirissa Point, which is known for its long and gentle waves, making it an ideal spot for surfers. The waves here are forgiving, providing an excellent environment for surf schools and beginners to learn and progress.

For more experienced surfers looking for a challenge, there's Pol Point, a reef break that offers fast and powerful waves. Timing is crucial, and the best conditions are usually during the southwest monsoon, from November to March when the tides are at their peak. Surfing schools and rental shops are located on the beach, making it easy for visitors to learn the art of surfing. The local instructors are experienced and patient and ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for everyone.

Snorkeling is a popular choice in Mirissa, allowing visitors to explore the vibrant underwater world of coral and marine life. Excursions are available for snorkeling trips to nearby spots such as Parrot Rock, where the clear waters reveal a kaleidoscope of colors beneath the surface.

Kayaking is also another fun activity found in Mirissa, where adventurers can paddle along the coast and explore the hidden Spiers and mangrove ecosystems. The calm

waters and scenic surroundings make kayaking a peaceful and immersive way to experience the beauty of the Mirissa coastline.



Figure 08: Snorkeling in Mirissa

Serene Sunsets and Nightlife



Figure 09: Nightlife in Mirissa

As the day wears off, Mirissa transforms into a magical backdrop for a breathtaking sunset. The sky is transformed into a canvas of vivid colors, creating a beautiful glow across the horizon. Many beachside bars and restaurants provide perfect vantage points for guests to relax and enjoy the serene beauty of the evening.

For those looking for a livelier atmosphere, Mirissa boasts a thriving nightlife scene. From beach parties to cozy cafés, there is something for everyone. The rhythmic beats of reggae and local tunes fill the air, creating a vibrant and inclusive atmosphere that appeals to a diverse range of tourists.

Fresh Seafood Delights

For seafood lovers, Mirissa will be a culinary haven. The city's coastal location ensures a steady supply of fresh catches, expertly prepared by local chefs. Local eateries and beach shacks serve mouth-watering seafood curries, grilled fish, and prawns, offering an authentic taste of Sri Lankan coastal cuisine. The vibrant spices and flavors of the culinary offerings of Mirissa are a testament to the rich food heritage of the island. Visitors can dine at beachside restaurants and enjoy delicious food while listening to the soothing sounds of the ocean. *(Long A. M., 2023)*



Figure 10: A gourmet night at Mirissa beach

Conclusion

With stunning beaches, marine wonders, exhilarating marine adventures, cultural experiences, and delicious cuisine, Mirissa stands out as an irresistible destination for tourists. Whether you're looking for relaxation on the sandy beaches, the thrill of whale watching, or the thrill of surfing, Mirissa offers an unforgettable experience in

Sri Lanka's tropical paradise. As word spreads about this hidden gem, Mirissa is sure to become a must-visit destination for every avid traveler.

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A Hidden Destination “Muthurajawela” Marsh

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Abstract

When focusing on the performance of tourism in Sri Lanka, it can be recognized that the tourist attractions are mostly located around the UNESCO World Heritage Sites and the beaches. However, it is an added advantage that Sri Lanka's geographical location and environmental beauty are designed to provide attractive experiences to tourists. In almost every region of Sri Lanka, many attractive places with such natural beauty can be seen, but very few of them have been promoted to tourists. Accordingly, the feasibility of promoting the "Muthurajawala" Wetland Ecosystem (Negombo) to tourists, a place that has not attracted much tourism, is studied.

Introduction

“Muthurajawela” is a coastal wetland ecosystem in Negombo City, Gampaha District, Western Province, Sri Lanka. The 1989 “Wildlife Act” designated the Muthurajawela Swamp as a “Protected Area for the Conservation of Biodiversity” but Muthurajawela is not an International Ramsar Site. The Muthurajawela Wetland consists of 3,068 hectares (7,580 acres) of which 1,776 hectares in the northern part were declared a sanctuary under the "Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance" in July 1996, making it one of the premier wetlands in Sri Lanka due to its unique and diverse ecosystem and listed as one of 12 wetlands.



Figure 01: Muthurajawela Wetland

History of Muthurajawela Wetlands

During the time of King “Weera Parakramabahu”, Negombo became famous as one of the best trading ports on the island. During this period, the Portuguese invaders came to Sri Lanka and started cultivating spices like cinnamon and pepper. To export these spices, it was necessary to transport them to the trading port in the Negombo lagoon, but while transporting these by sea, sailing over the ocean was a difficult task. Because of this, with the king's consent, a canal was created through this land connecting the “Kelani Ganga” to the Negombo Lagoon. This wetland area is located 2-3 meters below sea level and the Kelani River end and the Negombo area end of the canal are located in the intertidal zones. Due to these facts, the Dutch who came later widened this canal and the English built a new waterway named "Hamilton Canal" because of the high tide and the water seeping into the rice paddies after moving into the country. Nowadays, this wetland is very close to the highly urbanized area, so it has become an economically valuable area. In addition, its biodiversity is also very high. Sri Lanka has 41 wetlands and according to the 'Asian Wetlands List' published in 1989, Muthurajawela is one of the list. Later, in 1996, this 1028-hectare wetland was declared a National Park under the Wildlife and Flora Act of Sri Lanka. This Act enabled the control of this area and thus the possibility of providing legal protection to the flora and fauna of this area (Padda Boats on Hamilton Canal, Ceylon 1890, 2009). Here are some features of Muthurajawela Wetland.



Figure 02: The Mangrove Ecosystem of Muthurajawela Wetland

Flora and fauna

Muthurajawela is home to more than 194 species of vegetation and more than seven major vegetation types including swamps, lactic vegetation, scrublands, reeds, reeds, swamps, bogs, grasslands, stream banks, and mangrove forests. 194 species of flora belonging to 66 families have been recorded, including one endemic species, *Phoenix selanica*. Among the different types of vegetation, there are 115 species of trees and shrubs, and 23 species each of mangrove forests and canal banks. Unfortunately, due to the high level of human activities in this sanctuary and other human-related environmental factors, the vegetation composition of Muthurajawela seems to be changing rapidly. Vertebrate fauna includes 40 species of fish, 14 species of reptiles, 102 species of birds, and 22 species of mammals. Of the total vertebrate species documented, 17 are endemic and 26 are nationally threatened. Among the invertebrates, 48 species are butterflies, and another 22 species are dragonflies (Asia Tours).

Wildlife uniqueness

Muthurajawela Wetland represents 14 species including 4 endemic species of amphibians, 5 nationally endangered species, and 26 of the total amphibian species of the island. House frogs (*Common Toads*) and green frogs (*Six-toed Green Frogs*) are the most common species. Reptiles consist of 31 species, covering 20 of the island's reptiles. 9 endemic species are found here, and 6 species are nationally endangered. Common reptile species are the “Kabargoya” (*Water Monitor*) “Gara lizard” (*Common Garden Lizard*) and another pair of gecko species. An unusual star tortoise known as a dry zone species is also found here. Muthurajawela, a wetland habitat, has recorded 40 species of fish, which is about 45% of Sri Lanka's native freshwater fish species. It includes 5 endemic species, 5 nationally endangered species, and 4 exotic species. “Tilapia” (*Sarotherodon mossambicus*), Pearl Spot (*Etroplus suratensis*) known as “Karimin” and Dwarf Panchax (*Aplocheilichthys parvus*) known as “Udda” are the most common species found in Muthurajawela area. Fish species also include freshwater and marine migratory species that migrate to

fresh marine habitats to reproduce. Muthurajawela mammals represent 25 of the island's mammal species and consist of a total of 22 species, including one endemic species. Among them, 4 species are threatened with extinction nationally. Murid rats, also known as “Ohiya rats” and rats are common and the globally threatened Grey Slender Loris (Unahapuluva) are rarely seen in the Muthurajawela area. Birds are the dominant group of vertebrates in Muthurajawela. It consists of a total of 102 species including one endemic species. The mix of vegetation and aquatic habitats in the Muthurajawela area has made it an ideal habitat for a variety of birds. In the wetland ecosystem, the small eagles of Herons (Kos Lihiniya) are found here. This is a very important breeding habitat for many waterfowl.

Insects and other living species

48 species of butterflies have been recorded and these butterflies represent 20 of Sri Lanka's butterfly species. None of them are endemic but 6 species are nationally endangered. Among the common butterflies, there are 22 species of dragonflies including the Blue Glassy Tiger (Neela Palingu Gomara), Glassy Tiger (Neela Gomara), and Tailed Jay (Bathkura) and it is found in about 19 species of dragonflies recorded in Sri Lanka. It includes 2 endemic species and 2 nationally endangered species (Wijesinghe, 2016).

The tourism industry operates around the Muthurajawela Wetland,

- Boat rides
- Bird watching
- Photography

Although there is no tourism industry in this area, tourists who know about the Muthurajawela Wetland are anxious to visit it. Before the spread of Corona, many local tourists and school children came here in large numbers, but after that, the influx of local tourists reached a very zero value. But through different methods via,

- ✓ Travel Guides
- ✓ Travel companies
- ✓ Tour Operators



Figure 03: Birds that can be seen around the Muthurajawela Wetland

Foreign tourists who know the information here through other means can visit this place even after the spread of the coronavirus. However, it is observed that the arrival of foreign tourists has also decreased by 50% compared to the value before the spread of Corona. Anyway, even now, the tourism industry by launching boat rides here has been initiated by a local society which has initiated the Muthurajawela Environmental Center. Mr. Aruna acts as its manager and Mr. Chaminda acts as a tourist guide (Facebook page - Muthurajawela Visitor Center).

Boat rides

These boat rides start from the Muthurajawela Swamp and travel along the historic Holland Canal to the Negombo Lagoon. The tourist will be able to see the mangrove environment on the border of Negombo Lagoon, different types of birds, aquatic animals, monkey species, and different types of plants during this boat ride. Local fishermen can also be seen fishing in the lagoon and especially foreign tourists will have the opportunity to learn and enjoy their fishing culture. This boat ride can be done up to a maximum of 3 hours. Currently, the minimum package for this is Rs.16000 and the maximum number of passengers that can travel is fifteen (Private Muthurajawela Marsh Boat Safari) (Muthurajawela Marsh: Tickets & Tours).



Figure 04: Boating in Muthurajawela Wetland

Bird watching

Many tourists who want to watch birds in a beautiful natural environment go for this. A large number of endemic and endangered bird species can be seen around the Muthurajawela Wetland. The most important thing is that this ride is by boat through the swamp. Hence the tourist can get the experience of bird watching, photography and boat riding at the same time. Here it is most important to be under the guidance of an experienced bird guide or naturalist.



Figure 05: Bird watching and photography at Muthurajawela Wetland

There are very few tourist activities operating around the Muthurajawela Wetland. A lot of natural resources can be identified that can create many other tourism trends by studying the existing ecological and biological diversity as well as the topography. Some of the new tourism trends that can be implemented are as follows.

Fish therapy

According to the environmental and topographic features around the Muthurajawela Wetland, there is an opportunity to carry out fish therapy. By promoting such activities to tourists, it is possible to attract more tourists and also create an additional economic opportunity for the local people. Similar fish therapy activities are also carried out along the “Madu River” in Sri Lanka and the world-famous “Klias Wetland”, this fish spa is promoted to tourists as a treatment.

Prawn farming

The ability to promote shrimp cages as a new experience for foreign tourists is also related to this. At present, many shrimp traps can be seen in Muthurajawela Wetland and Kalapau, but they are not promoted to tourists. By doing this by following a proper regulatory system, the opportunity to achieve better results will arise.

Fishing

Another activity that can give the tourist a new experience is fishing. There is an opportunity to promote fishing to tourists along the Muthurajawela canal and lagoon. Even during the boat ride to the Negombo lagoon, there is the possibility of employing tourists. Most of the world's water-rich countries promote these activities to attract tourists. Australia, Costa Rica, Mexico, and Panama can be pointed out as countries that carry out tourist fishing.

Photography and photography Cabanas

The ecological diversity and biodiversity around the Muthurajawela Wetland are more attractive for tourists who are engaged in photography. Although there is very little bird photography today, it is not very popular among tourists. And for this, there is also the opportunity to build environment-friendly photo booths near the Muthurajawela Lagoon. It can be used for photography as well as watching the surrounding nature. This creates an opportunity to create a more attractive tourist environment.

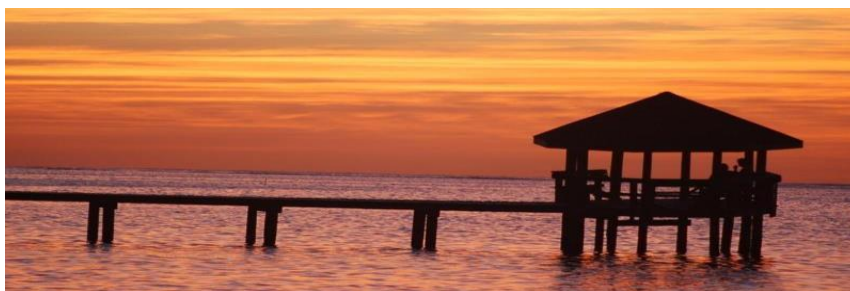


Figure 06: Suggested photo booths/ cabanas

Traditional fishing culture

The Muthurajawela lagoon is blessed with the ability to blend with the culture of the traditional fishing community of Sri Lanka, which gives the tourist a new experience. There is potential to promote their fishing methods to tourists, including traditional vessels and the process of landing fish. This will also provide an opportunity to improve the quality of life of the fishing community in the area.



Figure 07: Fishermen doing traditional fishing in Muthurajawela Wetlands

Single boating and double boating (Canoeing and Kayaking)

To provide an experience to tourists in a more environmentally friendly way, there is an opportunity to create kayaking and canoeing activities in this connection. The Hamilton Canal can be used to reduce the adverse effects of fuel smoke and noise on aquatic life and is also a more environmentally friendly activity (Darshana Athukorala, Roland C. Estoque, Yuji Murayama, Bunkei Mutsushita , 2021).

Conclusion

In conclusion, promoting hidden destinations to tourists can have numerous benefits for both travelers and the local communities. By showcasing lesser-known gems, we not only diversify tourism experiences but also alleviate the strain on popular tourist hotspots. This approach fosters sustainable tourism, encouraging a more responsible and respectful exploration of different cultures and environments. So, it will be an interesting experience for the tourist to present the beautiful views of the Muthurajawela Wetland to the tourists.

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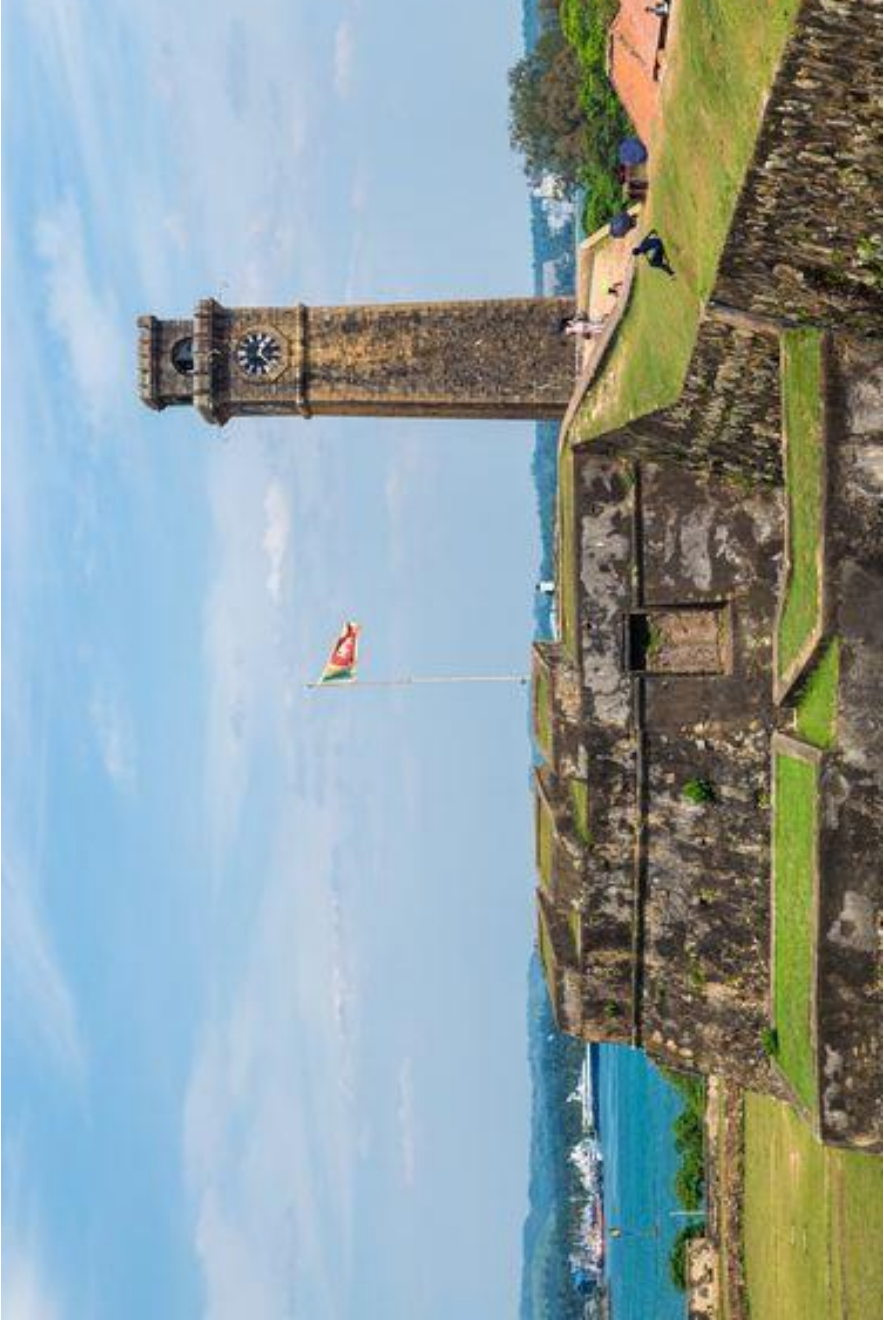
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Galle Fort

Galle Fort as a Tourist place

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Abstract

Galle Fort, located in the historic city of Galle on the southwestern coast of Sri Lanka, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site renowned for its rich history and well-preserved colonial architecture. Constructed by the Portuguese in the 16th century, later fortified by the Dutch, and further enhanced by the British, the fort encapsulates a fascinating blend of European influence and local culture. Surrounded by sturdy ramparts, Galle Fort encompasses charming cobblestone streets, iconic landmarks like the Galle Lighthouse, and many boutique shops, cafes, and galleries. Today, it stands as a testament to the island nation's diverse cultural heritage and serves as a popular tourist destination.

Introduction

Galle Fort, located on the southwest coast of Sri Lanka, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site that encapsulates centuries of history within its sturdy walls. Originally built by the Portuguese in the 16th century, it later underwent extensive modifications by the Dutch during the 17th century, and the British in the 18th century.



Figure 01: Galle fort

This historic fortress is a testament to the island's strategic importance in global maritime trade. The fort's architecture combines European styles with South Asian influences, creating a unique and charming blend. Its well-preserved ramparts offer breathtaking views of the Indian Ocean, while narrow cobblestone streets wind through colonial-era buildings, showcasing Dutch and British colonial architecture (UNESCO World Heritage Centre).

Inside the fort, visitors can explore the Galle Fort Lighthouse, the Maritime Museum, and the Dutch Reformed Church, among other historical landmarks. The area has transformed into a vibrant cultural hub, hosting art galleries, boutique shops, and cafes. The fusion of history, culture, and modern life makes Galle Fort a must-visit destination, drawing tourists and locals alike to immerse themselves in the captivating charm of this coastal fortress steeped in rich heritage (Sri Lanka Tourism).

Archaeology Values

The archaeological value of Galle Fort lies in its well-preserved structures, including ramparts, bastions, and colonial-era buildings that offer insights into the region's colonial history. The fort has endured centuries of change, witnessing the ebb and flow of different cultures and civilizations.

Culturally, Galle Fort has become a symbol of resilience, embodying the amalgamation of diverse influences that have shaped Sri Lanka's identity. Its cobblestone streets, historic churches, and distinctive architecture attract tourists and researchers alike, fostering an appreciation for the complex layers of history embedded in the fort's stones.

Today, Galle Fort is recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, not only for its archaeological significance but also for its cultural value in preserving the architectural legacy of the past. It stands as a living monument that narrates the stories of conquest, trade, and coexistence that have left an indelible mark on the cultural tapestry of Sri Lanka (Tripadvisor).

Importance as a tourist's place

Galle Fort, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Sri Lanka, has become a prominent destination for tourism, attracting visitors from around the globe. Renowned for its historical significance and architectural charm, the fort offers a captivating blend of colonial-era structures, vibrant local culture, and scenic coastal views.

Tourists flock to Galle Fort to stroll along its well-preserved cobblestone streets, explore the intricate maze of narrow alleys, and marvel at the colonial-era architecture that includes Dutch-style buildings, churches, and the iconic Galle Lighthouse. The fort's ramparts provide panoramic vistas of the Indian Ocean, creating a picturesque backdrop for visitors seeking both historical insights and stunning scenery.

The fort's cultural allure is further enhanced by its bustling markets, art galleries, and boutique shops that showcase local craftsmanship and cuisine. Visitors can immerse themselves in the rich heritage of the region by attending cultural events, exploring the Maritime Archaeological Museum, or simply enjoying the relaxed atmosphere of the cafes and restaurants within the fort.

Galle Fort has become a hub for cultural tourism, offering a unique and immersive experience that combines history, architecture, and local flavor. As a result, it has become an integral part of Sri Lanka's tourism landscape, drawing enthusiasts who seek to uncover the layers of history and culture embedded within its ancient walls (Atlas Obscura).

Conclusion

In conclusion, Galle Fort stands as an enchanting destination for tourists, seamlessly blending rich historical heritage with vibrant modernity. This UNESCO World Heritage Site in Sri Lanka captivates visitors with its well-preserved colonial architecture, charming cobblestone streets, and an inviting ambiance. The fort's cultural tapestry is woven with diverse influences, reflecting centuries of trade and colonization. Tourists are treated to a scope of experiences, from exploring ancient ramparts and museums to indulging in the local cuisine and shopping in quaint boutiques. Galle Fort, with its picturesque surroundings and a palpable sense of history, offers an immersive journey that leaves an indelible mark on every visitor's travel memory.

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2023: A Year in Review for Over-tourism

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Abstract

With visitor numbers around the world increasing towards pre-pandemic levels, the issue of overtourism is once again rearing its head. It has been progressively increasing over the last few years, particularly since the post-pandemic period. A significant growth in overtourism is evident in 2023. During this year, many well-known as well as lesser-known international destinations reached their peak, exceeding their carrying capacity and resulting in overtourism. This paper provides a brief overview of over-tourism in 2023, discussing how it affected international destinations and the solutions that have been implemented.

Keywords: Overtourism, Tourism Impact, Carrying Capacity

Introduction

Overtourism is a complex phenomenon that strongly affects the livability of a destination, as well as the experiences of residents, visitors, and different stakeholders who are either directly or indirectly involved with or affected by tourism (Coping with Success: Managing Overcrowding in Tourism Destinations | McKinsey) In short, over-tourism occurs when there are too many tourists visiting a particular destination. “Too many” is a subjective term, it is defined in each destination by residents, hosts, business owners, and tourists.

The phenomenon of over-tourism began to attract interest at the end of the 2010s due to negative impacts on tourist destinations. These impacts were proving to be detrimental not only to the environment but also to the quality of life of residents, the prices of tourist goods and services, the prices of real estate, facilities, culture and heritage, and the visitor experience (Ribeiro de Almeida, 2020). When rent prices push out local tenants to make way for holiday rentals, that is overtourism. When narrow roads become jammed with tourist vehicles, that is overtourism. When

wildlife is scared away, when tourists cannot view landmarks because of the crowds, that is overtourism, when fragile environments become degraded, that is overtourism. – these are all signs of overtourism (Francis, 2017).

Over Tourism's Impact on Travel Patterns in 2023

In 2023 overtourism continued to be a significant concern for Tourist destinations worldwide. It was particularly evident in both well-known and less-frequented international destinations. Many destinations reached their peak in terms of visitor numbers, surpassing their carrying capacity.

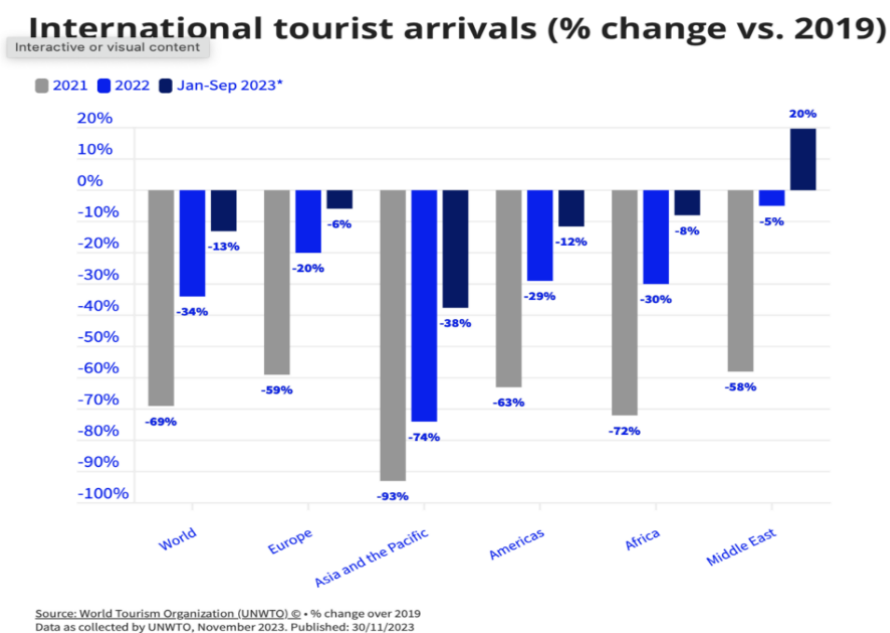


Figure 01: International tourist arrivals 2019

International tourism recovered 88% of pre-pandemic levels in 2023, supported by strong pent-up demand. Following a strong rebound in 2023, international tourism is expected to fully recover pre-pandemic levels in 2024. (UNWTO, 2023) When compared to the pre-pandemic year of 2019, the above graph suggests that tourism is on the verge of reaching, or has nearly reached, its peak of recovery. This positive development showcases the resilience and adaptability of the tourism industry.

Despite the promising recovery in the tourism sector during the first quarter of 2023, the remarkable growth observed has given rise to a new set of challenges. The flip side of this success story is the emergence of overtourism, which has impacted numerous international destinations throughout the year. Let's explore various global destinations where the number of visitors exceeded their sustainable limits resulting in overtourism and investigate the measures that were implemented to address these challenges.

Venice – Italy

More than 20 million tourists visited Venice in 2023. During the peak period, approximately 120,000 individuals visited the city daily, despite its population consisting of only 55,000 permanent residents. The challenges posed by over-tourism have significantly impacted on the daily lives of Venice's residents. Navigating through crowded streets filled with tourists, dealing with congested canals due to cruise ships, and witnessing the strain on the city's delicate structures have become major concerns.

To address the issue of over-tourism, Venice has taken a step by becoming the world's first destination to introduce ticketing for day trippers during peak seasons, cruise ships were banned from entering the fragile Venice lagoon, From 2024, all travelers to Venice will have to register their visit in advance and obtain a QR code online, To enforce the policy, the municipal police and authorized inspectors will carry out random checks. Anyone without the proper QR code will face a fine of up to €300 (£261). Venice plans to restrict walking tour groups to a maximum of 25 individuals and prohibit the use of loudspeakers. Additionally, these groups will be forbidden from halting in narrow streets, on bridges, or in passageways. This addresses a recurring issue seen in major cities like New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles, where people often come to a standstill in large groups while walking, causing disruptions, and impeding the movement of pedestrians who are simply observing or sightseeing.

Barcelona – Spain

In the first 11 months of 2023, the number of tourists who visited Spain increased by 18.2%, exceeding 79.8 million. Most of them visited the famous destination filled with cultural significance, surpassing the carrying capacity of Barcelona. This city is 101.9 km² in size.

Ada Colau, who served as the city's mayor from 2015 to June of 2023 in Barcelona, implemented several measures to address overtourism. These included restricting the number of permitted hotel beds, prohibiting the opening of new hotels, and establishing sanctioned one-way routes for guided tours. Moreover, guided tours are now required to use headphones instead of loud megaphones, and their group sizes are capped at 30 people or 15 in more sensitive areas. Recently, the city introduced an additional tax for cruise passengers, in addition to the existing nightly tourist tax applicable to all visitors. The revenue generated from these taxes is allocated to local development projects and initiatives studying the carbon footprint of tourism in the city (Yeung, 2023).

Amsterdam – Netherlands

Amsterdam, the Dutch capital, also experienced significant impacts from overtourism in 2023. The major impact of overtourism in Amsterdam is the displacement of local people. Young families are struggling to find affordable housing in the city and, as more apartments are rented out full-time to visitors, many residents are starting to find that they don't know their neighbors anymore (Overtourism in Amsterdam).

Amsterdam took proactive measures to address overtourism by launching the "Stay Away Campaign." Initiated in March 2023, "The discouragement campaign aims to keep out visitors that do not want. If we love the city, we must take action now," says Deputy Mayor Sofyan Mbarki in a statement (Woolsey, 2023). Amsterdam stands out as a favored destination for thousands of British stag (bachelor) parties due to its proximity to the UK and the permissibility of cannabis and brothels. These excursions often involve all-night drinking and drug activities, occasionally accompanied by

antisocial behavior, placing a burden on the daily lives of residents. The focus of the "Stay Away" campaign is specifically on British male tourists. However, authorities have indicated that it might be extended later to encompass visitors displaying disruptive behavior from other parts of the Netherlands and additional European Union countries.

Athens – Greece

Despite a scorching heat wave in Europe, numerous tourists flocked to the Greek capital in 2023. In Greece, residents have expressed their discontent with the substantial influx of travelers through protests organized under the banner of "Reclaim the Beach".

The Acropolis in Athens, the nation's most frequented archaeological site, became so congested that officials took the measure of limiting daily visitors to 20,000 through an hourly slot system on a booking site, which started in September. Additionally, it implemented electronic scanning of tickets and established separate entry points for large, organized groups. Currently, there is no limit on ticket sales, and it remains uncertain whether such a policy will be introduced shortly.

This approach will extend to over 25 additional archaeological sites and monuments throughout Greece from April 2024., encompassing 90-95% of visitors to Greek sites.

Bali – Indonesia

Bali is the most famous destination for Tourism in Indonesia. In the span of the 12 months from December 2022 to November 2023, Bali played host to 5,167,981 international visitors. Meanwhile, in the 2023 year-to-date period from January – November 2023 - 4,790,568 foreign visitors flocked to Bali (Bali's Tourism Statistics: Insights from November 2023, 2024). The island's constrained infrastructure is facing significant strain due to over-tourism, giving rise to issues such as escalating land prices, extensive developments, congested narrow streets due to traffic jams, and the presence of litter on once pristine beaches.

To avoid overtourism, Bali introduced a tax for tourists - all foreign tourists entering Bali must pay a retribution fee of USD 10 or the equivalent of IDR150,000. This regulation is based on Law Number 15 of 2023 concerning the Province of Bali. Due to tourists' misbehavior during a press briefing on March 12, Bali Governor I Wayan Koster announced foreign tourists will be unable to rent motorbikes to get around the island starting this year. Instead, the governor is urging foreigners to rent cars and use other transportation services to ensure quality and dignified tourism.

France

France's tourism sector continued a strong rebound as overnight stays in hotels and other short-term accommodations rose 12.6% in Q1 2023 compared to the same period one year ago, according to the nation's official statistics agency. In the latest tourism barometer published in August 2023, the National Institute for Statistics (INSEE) noted that tourism was boosted by a strong increase in visitors from the U.K. Overnight stays by British tourists rose 102.5%, compared to an increase of 41.7% for Germans, 9.7% for Dutch, and 62.3% for Americans. The report does not include camping sites. (O'Brien, 2024)

France's Tourism Minister, Olivia Gregoire, has introduced a plan to regulate visitor numbers at popular sites, aiming to combat the issue of "overtourism." Acknowledging the urgent need for better management of peak-season influxes, especially in prime destinations like the Mont-Saint-Michel abbey, the plan focuses on preserving the environment, local quality of life, and the visitor experience. Overwhelming sites, like Etretat Beach and its 10,000 daily tourists, prompted concerns about environmental damage and the lack of economic benefits for local businesses. The government plans to set up a monitoring group, leveraging social media influencers to promote responsible tourism and exploring measures such as higher taxes or access fees to manage the impact. Efforts will also encourage tourists to explore lesser-known regions, spreading the influx across different destinations and seasons. The government aims to balance tourism benefits with environmental sustainability and local well-being.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the year 2023 marked a notable resurgence in global tourism, with visitor numbers approaching pre-pandemic levels. However, this revival brought forth the recurring challenge of over-tourism, impacting both renowned and less-frequent international destinations.

As international travel rebounded, overtourism manifested in issues such as strained infrastructure, escalating land prices, and disruptions to the daily lives of residents. Venice, Barcelona, Amsterdam, Athens, Bali, and other destinations faced the consequences of surpassing their carrying capacity.

Governments and local authorities responded with diverse strategies to mitigate the effects of overtourism. Venice pioneered ticketing for day trippers, restricted walking tour groups, and implemented measures to regulate cruise ship access. Barcelona's initiatives included limiting hotel beds, imposing additional taxes, and introducing a QR code system for visitors. Amsterdam launched the "Stay Away Campaign" to discourage undesirable tourism, targeting specific demographics.

Greece grappled with overtourism at the Acropolis, implementing hourly time slots, ticketing systems, and restrictions on daily visitors. The government plans to extend these measures to other archaeological sites. Bali introduced a tourist tax and restricted motorbike rentals to combat overtourism-related challenges.

France, recognizing the urgency of the overtourism issue, devised a plan to regulate visitor numbers at popular sites. The government aims to balance the benefits of tourism with environmental sustainability and local well-being. This includes leveraging social media influencers to promote responsible tourism, exploring higher taxes or access fees, and encouraging visitors to explore lesser-known regions.

While the tourism industry showcased resilience and adaptability, the challenges posed by over tourism underscore the need for sustainable and well-managed tourism practices. As a reflection on the events of 2023, the global community must continue to address over-tourism through collaborative efforts, innovative solutions, and a commitment to preserving the cultural, environmental, and social fabric of destinations around the world.

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The Potential of Sri Lanka's Ayurvedic Tradition as a Driver of Wellness Tourism: A Holistic Approach to Wellbeing

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Abstract

This research article explores the potential of Sri Lanka's rich Ayurvedic tradition as a dynamic driver of wellness tourism. Drawing on scholarly works and industry reports, it analyzes the global trends in wellness tourism, the historical and philosophical foundations of Ayurveda, and the unique advantages Sri Lanka possesses in the Ayurvedic landscape. The discussion delves into the diverse facets of Ayurvedic offerings in Sri Lanka, ranging from personalized treatments and yoga retreats to immersive cultural experiences and the integration of local botanical resources. By examining the challenges and opportunities in developing a sustainable and holistic approach to Ayurvedic tourism, this article suggests strategies for fostering responsible growth and maximizing the benefits for both local communities and international travelers. Ultimately, it argues that Sri Lanka's Ayurvedic tradition, with its potent blend of holistic healing, cultural richness, and breathtaking natural beauty, presents a highly promising avenue for flourishing in the global wellness tourism market. (Wellness, 2023)

Keywords: *Wellness tourism, Ayurveda, Sri Lanka, holistic health, sustainable development*

Introduction

In today's fast-paced world, the pursuit of holistic well-being has become a global phenomenon. Wellness tourism, encompassing travel experiences that prioritize physical, mental, and spiritual health, has witnessed a remarkable surge in recent years. Among the diverse approaches contributing to this trend, Ayurveda, the ancient Indian system of holistic medicine, occupies a prominent position. With its emphasis on personalized treatments, natural remedies, and lifestyle guidance, Ayurveda offers a unique path to achieving balance and resilience in a world characterized by stress, anxiety, and chronic health challenges.

Sri Lanka, an island nation blessed with stunning landscapes, vibrant culture, and a rich heritage, stands out as a particularly promising destination for Ayurvedic wellness tourism. Home to a flourishing Ayurvedic tradition for over 2,500 years, Sri Lanka offers a unique blend of factors that can synergistically enhance the holistic wellness experience. This article delves into the immense potential of Sri Lanka's Ayurvedic tradition as a driver of sustainable and responsible wellness tourism development.

This research aims to delve into the multifaceted potential of Sri Lanka's Ayurveda as a driver of wellness tourism. It will:

- Analyze the rising global demand for holistic wellness experiences and the inherent synergy with Ayurveda.
- Explore the existing literature on Sri Lanka's Ayurvedic scene and its impact on tourism.
- Identify the key challenges hindering growth and potential solutions for sustainable development.
- Propose strategies for responsible marketing and promoting Sri Lanka's unique Ayurvedic offerings.

Literature Review

The burgeoning field of wellness tourism has garnered significant academic attention in recent years. Scholars like (S.Cohen, 2019) highlight the shift towards "transformative travel" emphasizing personal growth and well-being, while others like (John Fletcher, Alan Fyall, David Gilbert, Stephen Wanhill, 2017) explore the diverse motivations and experiences of wellness tourists. Within this spectrum, Ayurveda has emerged as a significant niche, with studies like Pandey and Ramkumar (2018) exploring its growing popularity in Southeast Asia and its potential for promoting cultural sustainability.

Focusing specifically on Sri Lanka, several researchers have documented the historical and philosophical roots of Ayurveda in the country. Hewawasam (2010)

emphasizes the deep integration of Ayurveda with Buddhist philosophical principles, while Fernando (2014) examines the unique features of Sri Lankan Ayurveda, characterized by its emphasis on herbal remedies and indigenous knowledge. The potential of Sri Lanka's Ayurvedic tradition for tourism has also been acknowledged by industry reports like the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau's (2019) "Wellness Tourism Strategy," which highlights the country's natural resources, traditional practices, and skilled practitioners as key driving forces (SLTDA, 2019).

However, challenges within the Sri Lankan Ayurvedic tourism landscape have also been identified. Weerakkody and Weerakkody (2018) point to the lack of standardization and regulation in Ayurvedic practices, while de Alwis (2013) emphasizes the need for responsible development that respects local communities and preserves the integrity of traditional knowledge.

The global wellness tourism market, estimated at USD 643.7 billion in 2022, is projected to reach USD 999.9 billion by 2027, reflecting a burgeoning interest in holistic well-being (Global Wellness Institute; Institute, 2022). This growth is fueled by several factors, including:

- Rising urbanization and stress: Modern lifestyles contribute to stress, burnout, and chronic health issues, propelling a desire for preventative and natural wellness solutions.
- Increased disposable income: Affluent individuals seek experiences that enhance well-being beyond material possessions, leading them to invest in personalized and transformative travel.
- Shifting demographics: Baby boomers and millennials, now major tourist segments, prioritize healthy living and are drawn to authentic cultural experiences.
- Growing awareness of alternative therapies: The scientific validation of alternative medicine practices like Ayurveda fuels global interest and acceptance.

- Sri Lanka, with its natural beauty, diverse ecosystems, and vibrant culture, provides an ideal setting for Ayurvedic wellness experiences. Several studies highlight the country's potential:

- (DeSilva, 2020) identifies Ayurveda as a significant contributor to Sri Lanka's tourism industry, attracting high-spending tourists and promoting cultural exchange.

- (GMBH, 2020) emphasizes the need for differentiated marketing strategies, leveraging Sri Lanka's unique blend of Ayurveda and indigenous Hela Wedakama practices.

- (Wijeratne et al, 2018) suggest harnessing local knowledge and resources to develop sustainable and community-driven Ayurvedic tourism initiatives.

However, challenges stand in the way of harnessing the full potential of Sri Lanka's Ayurvedic tradition. These include:

- Lack of standardization: Inconsistent quality and varying qualifications of practitioners can deter tourists from seeking reliable and effective treatments.

- Inadequate infrastructure: Limited accessibility to remote Ayurvedic centers and lack of amenities can dampen enthusiasm.

- Limited marketing strategies: Ineffective outreach and inadequate understanding of target audiences can restrict market reach.

- Balancing authenticity with commercialization: Striking a balance between preserving traditional practices and catering to modern preferences is crucial for long-term success.

Discussion

Unveiling the intricate tapestry of Sri Lanka's potential in Ayurvedic wellness tourism demands a closer look at the distinct advantages it possesses, the diverse offerings waiting to be explored, and the delicate dance between flourishing tourism and responsible development. The discussion section will expand on the following key points:

•*Unique Advantages of Sri Lankan Ayurveda:*

Analyze the factors that differentiate Sri Lanka from other Ayurvedic destinations, including its long history and unique formulations, the abundance of endemic medicinal plants, the holistic approach integrating yoga, meditation, and naturopathy, and the picturesque natural settings conducive to relaxation and healing. Stepping onto Sri Lankan soil unveils a treasure trove of factors differentiating it from other Ayurvedic destinations. Its unbroken lineage stretches back over 2,500 years, weaving a rich tapestry of knowledge passed down through generations of dedicated practitioners. This translates into unique formulations and techniques not found elsewhere, honed through centuries of adaptation to the island's specific climate and flora. Mother Nature's bounty further embellishes this Ayurvedic allure. Sri Lanka boasts an unparalleled wealth of endemic medicinal plants, many with properties unknown elsewhere. This natural pharmacy provides the foundation for potent treatments and remedies, tailored to address a multitude of ailments and imbalances. Beyond the physical realm, Sri Lankan Ayurveda distinguishes itself through its holistic approach. The focus extends beyond merely alleviating symptoms; it delves into restoring harmony within the mind, body, and spirit. This philosophy manifests in the seamless integration of practices like yoga, meditation, and naturopathy, weaving a comprehensive tapestry of well-being.

Finally, the island's breathtaking natural canvas acts as the perfect backdrop for this transformative journey. From the pristine beaches lapped by turquoise waters to the emerald embrace of lush rainforests, Sri Lanka's landscapes provide a potent setting for physical rejuvenation and mental de-cluttering.

•*Diverse Offerings for Wellness Tourists:*

Explore the spectrum of Ayurvedic experiences available in Sri Lanka, ranging from personalized treatments tailored to individual needs to immersive retreats encompassing yoga, meditation, and cultural encounters. Discuss the potential for integrating local culinary traditions and traditional healing practices to create a truly holistic experience.

Sri Lanka's Ayurvedic tapestry extends far beyond a singular, standardized experience. For the discerning wellness traveler, a kaleidoscope of possibilities awaits. Personalized treatments, meticulously crafted to address individual needs and imbalances, form the cornerstone of this offering. Whether seeking to soothe chronic pain, enhance immunity, or embark on a detoxifying journey, each guest receives a unique roadmap to optimal health.

Beyond the treatment rooms, immersive retreats beckon with the promise of profound transformation. These immersive experiences weave together the threads of Ayurvedic therapies, yoga and meditation sessions, and carefully curated cultural encounters. Imagine mornings marked by invigorating yoga asanas overlooking misty mountains, afternoons filled with rejuvenating herbal massages, and evenings spent delving into the wisdom of ancient Buddhist temples. Such retreats offer a holistic immersion, nourishing not just the body but also the soul.

The culinary journey, too, plays a vital role in the Sri Lankan Ayurvedic experience. Traditional dishes, prepared with fresh, locally sourced ingredients and infused with Ayurvedic principles, nourish the body while tantalizing the taste buds. Each meal becomes a conscious act of self-care, aligning with individual doshas and fostering internal harmony.

•*Challenges and Opportunities in Sustainable Development:*

Address the concern that uncontrolled development of Ayurvedic tourism might exploit local resources and communities. Propose strategies for responsible growth, including community-based initiatives, adherence to ethical and sustainable practices, and collaboration with local practitioners and knowledge holders.

While the immense potential of Sri Lankan Ayurvedic tourism shines bright, responsible development remains a delicate balancing act. Uncontrolled growth risks exploiting local resources and communities, severing the very roots that nourish this precious tradition. To navigate this terrain with wisdom, embracing community-based initiatives becomes paramount. Partnering with local villagers, incorporating

their knowledge and skills into tourism experiences, and ensuring fair compensation for their contributions are essential steps towards sustainable development.

Adherence to ethical and sustainable practices forms another cornerstone of responsible growth. Implementing eco-friendly initiatives, sourcing ingredients responsibly, and minimizing resource consumption are crucial aspects of ensuring that Ayurvedic tourism thrives in harmony with the environment.

Finally, collaboration with local practitioners and knowledge holders is key to preserving the integrity of Ayurveda. Working alongside experienced vaidyas (Ayurvedic doctors) and respecting their wisdom ensures that the essence of this ancient tradition remains at the heart of the tourism experience.

•*Maximizing Benefits for Local Communities:*

Explore ways in which Ayurvedic tourism can empower local communities and contribute to economic development. Discuss initiatives like fair trade practices for sourcing medicinal plants, skills development programs for local practitioners, and cultural preservation efforts.

When thoughtfully harnessed, Ayurvedic tourism can become a potent force for empowering local communities and fostering economic development. By prioritizing locally owned and operated businesses, ensuring fair wages for employees, and investing in infrastructure development, tourism can act as a catalyst for positive change. Furthermore, supporting traditional arts and crafts, showcasing local cultural treasures, and promoting responsible land management practices can all contribute to building a vibrant and sustainable future for Sri Lanka's rural communities.

Ultimately, Sri Lanka's Ayurvedic tradition presents a golden opportunity to weave a future where wellness forges a harmonious alliance with cultural preservation, environmental sustainability, and community empowerment. By embracing responsible development, Sri Lanka can not only carve a unique niche in the global wellness tourism market but also ensure that this rich heritage continues to blossom for generations to come.

Conclusion

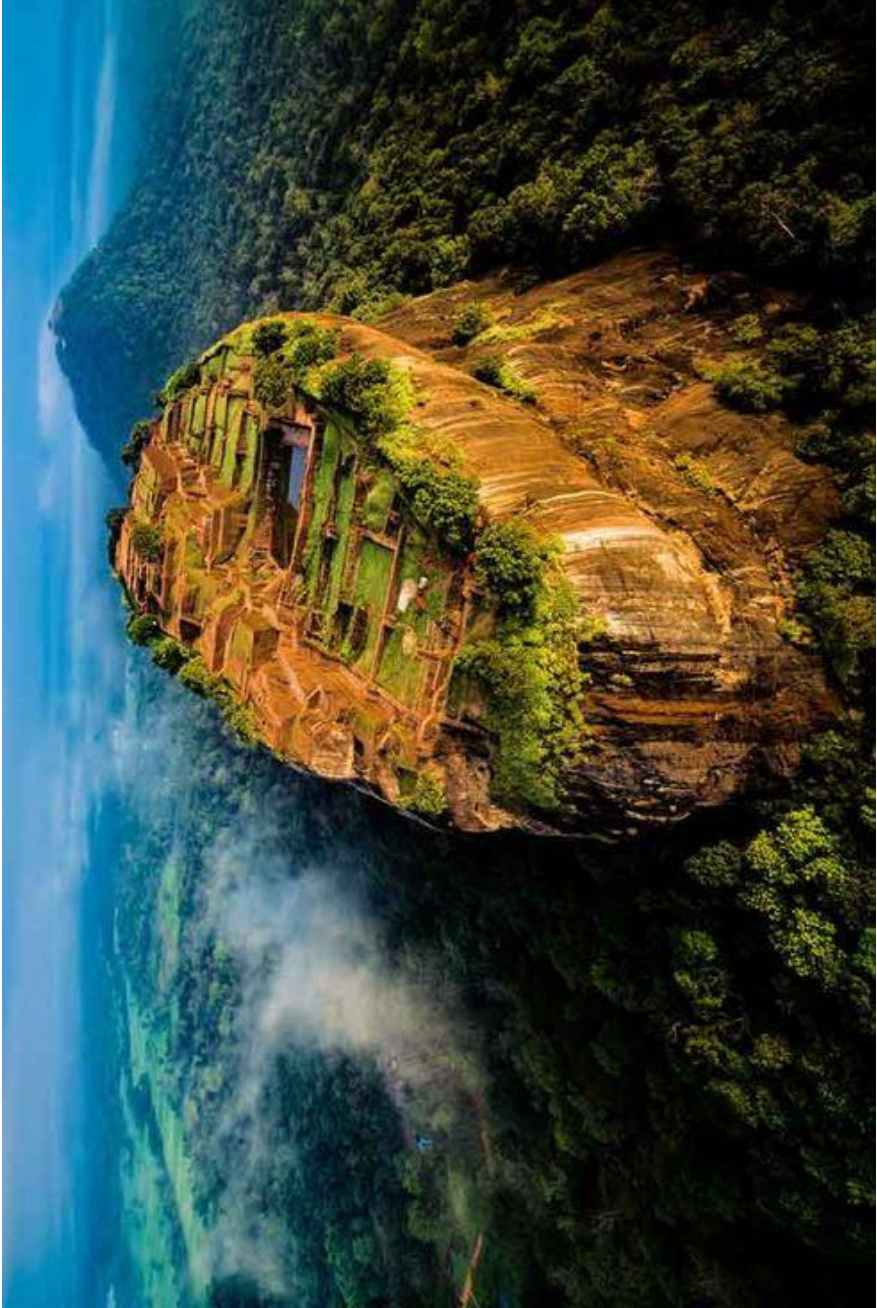
This article concludes by emphasizing the immense potential of Sri Lanka's Ayurvedic tradition as a driver of sustainable and responsible wellness tourism. By leveraging its unique strengths, developing diverse offerings, and prioritizing ethical and community-centered practices, Sri Lanka can gain a high tourist arrival. As the world awakens to the vital importance of holistic well-being, Sri Lanka stands poised to emerge as a leading destination for Ayurvedic wellness tourism. Its ancient wisdom, pristine landscapes, and diverse offerings present a compelling invitation to embark on a transformative journey of mind, body, and spirit.

By overcoming challenges, adopting strategic development approaches, and embracing responsible practices, Sri Lanka can carve a unique niche in the global wellness market. This will not only attract discerning travelers seeking holistic well-being but also foster cultural exchange, generate economic opportunities, and promote sustainable development within local communities. As the world increasingly turns towards holistic approaches to health and well-being, Sri Lanka, with its ancient wisdom and verdant beauty, is poised to become a beacon of Ayurvedic wellness, offering transformative experiences for both travelers and local communities.

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Sigiriya

The wonder of the world that surprised tourists around the world

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Abstract

Sigiriya has a special place when considering both the domestic and international tourist attractions in Sri Lanka. UNESCO has designated Sigiriya as a cultural world heritage site because of its cultural value. Also, it is worth discussing the location in which is Sigiriya situated in the conditions in Sigiriya and its surrounding area from the beginning until now, and how the past story related to Sigiriya Rock flows. It is especially valuable as an archaeological site, and the technology used in the construction of its kingdom and its creativity such as architectural elements, geometrical garden designs, art, and graffiti must be talked about. Also, the purpose of this article is to briefly discuss the current situation of Sigiriya, the tourist attraction it receives at present, as well as the problems that may arise about it and some solutions, we can use to increase the tourist attraction to Sigiriya.

Introduction

Sigiriya can be identified as a tourist attraction that attracts the most attention of local and foreign tourists who travel to Sri Lanka. Tourists are curious to see this wonderful creation that has amazed the world. It is one of the most unique archaeological sites in the world. Sigiriya which is Located near Dambulla city about 160 km away from Colombo. It belongs to the Matale district in Central Province. It is also about 30 miles from Anuradhapura. Sigiriya is located between the 97th and 98th mileposts on the Colombo - Habarana main road.

Sigiriya is a two-hundred-meter-high granite rock. The rock was formed during the pre-Cambrian period. Sigiriya is mentioned for the first time in genealogies in the 5th century AD. However, according to the Brahmin inscriptions found in the surrounding area, Sigiriya is one of the earliest Aryan settlements in Sri Lanka (විජේතුංග, 2017).



Figure 01: Sigiriya rock

History and Archaeological values

Sigiriya is the only place in Sri Lanka that was made a kingdom by a single king.

Sigiriya became the capital in 477 AD during the reign of King Kashyapa I. The city of Sigiriya, which was the capital of Sri Lanka for 18 years, is spread over an area of about 4 square kilometers. It is said that in the past there were about 150 villages and about 200 large tanks around Sigiriya. It became more famous after it became the capital of King Kashyapa. There was a palace of about three acres on top of the Sigiriya rock. The ruins of the palace on top of the rock are the oldest example of a royal palace found in Sri Lanka. Also, at the foot of Sigiriya rock, there are defensive walls, stone towers, ponds, moats, and flower gardens. The water management technology used in Sigiriya is amazing. On some rainy days, some water plants in Sigiriya are still functioning today. Its gardens are the oldest gardens found in South Asia. It is special to see geometrically designed as well as non-geometric natural gardens among these gardens. Even today, tourists who visit Sigiriya can see the ruins of those works (Sigiriya Sri Lanka» Official Travel Guide to Lion Rock, 2020).

Not only the building ruins but also the rock paintings are a fascinating feature to see at Sigiriya Rock. Scholars believe that these murals seen in Sigiriya are inspired by the Ajanta cave paintings in India. Also, the graffiti on the so-called mirror wall is considered the oldest example of Sinhala poetry. Great city planning, architectural excellence, water engineering marvels, and high appreciation of aesthetics, and balance of nature and culture are some of the main features of Sigiriya.

Sigiriya, which became the capital and became an art gallery in the fifth century AD, became a monastery after King Kashyapa I. Later, Sigiriya which was deserted, was found again when Ceylon was a British colony. Sigiriya, being a capital city, ruins of the palace on top of it, Sigiriya wall paintings, Sigiriya graffiti, and water technology in Sigiriya have made Sigiriya a unique cultural feature of Sri Lanka. Also, Sigiriya is one of the best examples of ancient urban planning in Sri Lanka.

Sigiriya has been recognized as the best monument of the world in the fifth century.

Current situation at Sigiriya

Sigiriya is one of the most important archaeological sites in Asia. In 1982, Sigiriya was added to the UNESCO World Heritage List as the 202nd World Heritage Site of the world. Currently, Sigiriya is managed by the Sri Lanka Department of Archeology and the Central Cultural Fund. Many domestic and international tourists come every day to see the Sigiriya rock, which still stands majestically today, encapsulating the glory of the past. During the first six months of last year (2023), Sigiriya received a total of 434,943 visitors. Out of these, 330,943 were domestic tourists, and 103,479 were international tourists. (SLTDA, 2023)

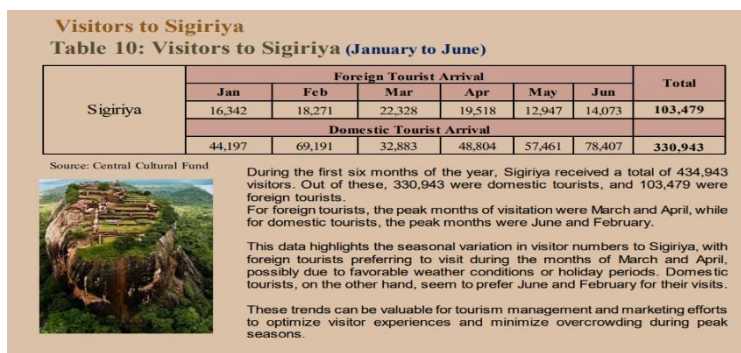


Figure 02: Retrieved from SLTDA official website

Our country can earn a lot of foreign income from the tourism industry around Sigiriya, but several problems can be identified in promoting the tourism industry around Sigiriya. Sigiriya is primarily an archaeological site. Apart from visiting the rock and other related ruins, tourists do not have the opportunity to engage in any other activities there. For a tourist who has visited Sigiriya once, there is nothing new

to visit there again. He gets a monotonous experience there. The tourist who spends a lot of money to visit Sigiriya will not get an experience worth the money. Due to this, there is a risk of a decline in tourism around Sigiriya. Even now, many tourists, mostly young people, are more attracted to the nearby attractions like Pidurangala in addition to Sigiriya.

As a country, we must act to prevent the tourism industry from collapsing due to the decrease in the attraction of Sigiriya. For that, we can find new features that can increase the attraction of tourists around Sigiriya. For that, introducing the activities that tourists can engage in, presenting local cultural aspects to tourists as well as allowing tourists to taste local foods can be presented. Through these activities, we can increase the attraction of tourists to Sigiriya and provide new sources of income for the local people living in the vicinity.

Conclusion

Sigiriya is one of the most valuable places in our country. It has so many cultural, architectural, and archaeological values. By developing and promoting this place as a tourist attraction we can have a huge economic impact on our country. But during the promotion of this attraction, we must not harm its cultural and natural aspects. Therefore, we should focus on further protecting Sigiriya, which was a great gift from the past, and developing it in sustainable ways and using it for tourism.

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The Emergence of Dark Tourism

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Abstract

In this article, we explore the concept of dark tourism, where tourists visit sites associated with death, tragedy, and suffering. Also known as black tourism, grief tourism, or Thana tourism, it has gained popularity globally, thanks to social media and documentaries. Following its roots back to Roman times, where people gathered for gladiator fights, dark tourism has evolved over the years. Despite being considered by some as inappropriate, dark tourism has diverse motivations, including curiosity, education, an interest in history and death, remembrance, and an understanding of frightening events. The article explores the multifaceted nature of dark tourism, categorizing it into types like travels to watch death, travels to sites after death has occurred, travels to internment sites and memorials, and travels to re-enactments, etc. Based on the tourist's motivations these aspects would give us a comprehensive understanding of the concept of Dark tourism. Through exploring these features, the article aims to explore the motivations behind dark tourism, showcasing its popularity as a unique and evolving tourism product.

What is dark tourism?

Dark tourism can be defined as a tourism product linked to the darker aspects of the human experience, such as crime, war, death, murder, and disaster. Actual locations of dark events, such as cemeteries, crash sites, and death camps, hold a fascination for death and calamity among some tourists, contributing to the increasing popularity of numerous sites worldwide. This has paved the way for dark tourism to become a significant component of the tourism industry.

Although dark tourism is relatively new to the tourism sector, its history can be traced back to the ancient Roman era. The Roman gladiatorial games held in the Colosseum during that time may be considered one of the first instances of dark tourist attractions, drawing numerous visitors to witness such events. Even during the medieval era, gatherings to witness public executions serve as examples of early dark tourism activities.

Motivations of a dark tourist

The motivations of tourists engaging in dark tourism are mainly psychological, involving emotions such as insecurity, gratitude, humility, and superiority. Some critics view dark tourism activities as disgraceful, depicting cruelty to the deceased. Families of those associated with these dark events may reject the use of tragedy sites for tourism purposes. Despite these concerns, dark tourism continues to expand globally, with some countries officially making it a main tourism product to generate revenue. Romania, considered the birthplace of Count Dracula, is one such example. Looking ahead, dark tourism is considered multifaceted, consisting of various fields linked to the motivations of dark tourists.

The five dark tourism activities are based on a dark tourist's motivations.

According to *Seaton* (1999), dark tourism can be categorized into five activities based on a tourist's motivations:

- 1) travel to watch death
- 2) travel to sites after death has occurred
- 3) travel to internment sites and memorials
- 4) travel to re-enactments
- 5) travel to synthetic sites where evidence of death has been assembled.

1) Travel to watch death

The idea of "travel to death" dates to ancient times, like the public hangings and executions mentioned earlier. Back then, people found these events interesting, even entertaining. Though we don't see such specific dark tourism much nowadays, there's a modern example in the annual "Running of the Bulls" in Pamplona, Spain.

The Running of the Bulls is a long-standing Spanish tradition that began in the late 14th century. People from around the world visit Spain to be part of this unique cultural celebration. Despite the festive mood, there's a darker side as sometimes people and bulls lose their lives. Visiting Pamplona for the Running of the Bulls fits the idea of "travel to witness death," connecting with the concept of dark tourism.

2) Travel to sites after death has occurred

According to Seaton (1999), another activity in dark tourism is "travel to sites after death has occurred." An example of this is the State Museum of Auschwitz in Poland, often referred to as Holocaust tourism due to the large number of tourists it attracts daily. It stands out as the epitome of dark tourism, focusing on the horrors of the Holocaust.

Visiting sites like Auschwitz, where death has already occurred, can be driven by motivations such as a personal connection to the site, educational interests, or simple curiosity. Auschwitz, one of the largest and deadliest Nazi concentration and death camps, gained popularity somewhat because survivors from this camp shared their experiences, forming curiosity among dark tourists.

The State Museum of Auschwitz presents extensive historical backgrounds, photographic evidence, and deeply shocking exhibits, including countless prostrate limbs, enormous piles of women's hair, gas chambers, and gigantic heaps of victims' shoes. The scale of mass killings and torture at this site is unimaginable, providing a dark and challenging experience for tourists engaging in activities associated with dark tourism attractions like Auschwitz (Dark tourism and world heritage sites, 2018).

3) Travel to internment sites and memorials

Travel to internment sites and memorials is the third category of activities linked to dark tourism. A good example is the Hiroshima Peace Memorial in Japan, which serves as a place to pray for the atomic bomb victims and symbolizes a lasting world peace. The bombing of Hiroshima in 1945 during World War II is remembered as one of the deadliest events in human history.

These kinds of dark tourism activities involve exploring places related to past internments, detentions, or memorials honoring historical events. The Hiroshima Peace Memorial is not only a tribute to the victims but also a symbol of peace. It has about 60 monuments and memorials, each preserving the memory of the world's first

nuclear attack (UNESCO Official Site – Hiroshima Peace Memoria). Many tourists visit this memorial site, with some showing respect and offering condolences in the central memorial space dedicated to the A-bomb victims.

In 1996, this site was recognized as a World Heritage Site, symbolizing a time of peace after one of humanity's deadliest moments. The Hiroshima Peace Memorial continues to attract visitors globally, representing both remembrance and a commitment to worldwide harmony.

4) Travel to re-enactments

Tourist reenactments of the past involve various local historical and tourist-inspired narratives that are presented and interpreted when visiting a tourist site, mainly associated with dark tourism. Travels to reenactments are the fourth activity presented by Seaton (1999), linked with dark tourism. The legend of D-Day, representing a popular reenactment of the historical event at one of the most well-known sites of World War II, the Normandy beach landing sites, can be cited as an example of these kinds of travels by dark tourists.

The Normandy coastlines showcase the Battle of Normandy that led to the liberation of France against the Nazis. Tourists from around the world visit the D-Day landings of Normandy, and it is the most internationally commemorated landscape of World War II, with at least 300 memorials, cemeteries, and museums. Through historical reenactments on the coastlines of Normandy, along with other celebrations to pay tribute to the achievements and sacrifices of those who fought here during the 1940s, the popularity of the Normandy beach landing sites has always been at the top (80th anniversary of D-Day and the battle of Normandy, 1994, 2024).

According to Evans & Lunn (1997) and Winter (2006), these kinds of travels that display the re-enactments and commemoration of wars can be described as a memory boom, representing and interpreting war memory and history. Thus, it is considered an activity associated with dark tourism.

5) Travel to synthetic sites where evidence of death has been assembled.

Traveling to places where evidence of death is displayed is the final activity introduced by Seaton (1999) in dark tourism. This involves visiting museums that show things like weapons, clothes of murder victims, and other related artifacts. An example is the Museum of Death in Los Angeles, California. It has the world's biggest collection of serial killer artwork and was created in 1995 to "make people happy to be alive" (Jessica- Newest Hidden CA Adventures).

The museum has shocking displays related to death, cannibalism, and serial killer artwork, including crime scene photos. There's even a suicide room for tourists to experience something disturbing and learn about death. The exhibits are graphic and awaken strong emotions, making it a unique dark tourism destination (Museum of death: History & facts of the famous exhibition,2018).

This museum explores the darker parts of human history by showcasing art and crafts related to death. Visitors can learn about the profound and sometimes disturbing stories behind the displayed artifacts.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this article has provided us with a comprehensive understanding of tourism products, mainly exploring the fascinating realm of dark tourism. By exploring the motivations that drive tourists to engage in dark tourism, we've identified five key activities associated with this concept, as categorized by Seaton (1999): travels to witness death, visits to sites after death has occurred, journeys to internment sites and memorials, participation in reenactments, and exploration of synthetic sites where evidence of death has been assembled.

To further explain these activities, the article highlighted important dark tourism attractions such as the running of the bulls, the State Museum of Auschwitz, Hiroshima Peace Memorials, Normandy Beach landing sites, and the Museum of

Death in LA. Each example offered us the diverse and sometimes controversial experiences that dark tourists seek.

In general, the details presented in this article have allowed us to gain a clear comprehension of the concept of dark tourism and the various types of journeys that dark tourists may choose to engage in. From witnessing historical events to exploring places with darker significance, dark tourism opens up a unique perspective on travel, and the diverse motivations of tourists between curiosity, education, and the human connection to the darker aspects of our collective history.

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Promotion of Lotus Tower as a major adventure tourist attraction in Western Province

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Abstract

Lotus Beyond Bungee: Unlocking a Multifaceted Adventure Gem in Sri Lanka

While the Lotus Tower offers a thrilling bungee jump, its true potential for captivating diverse tourists extends far beyond. This research explores the tower's untapped adventure tourism horizons, drawing inspiration from successful international models like indoor rock climbing, skydiving, and edge walking. By analyzing current promotional strategies, unique offerings, and strategic location within the Western Province, it proposes a holistic approach to diversify activities, enhance visitor experiences, and establish the tower as a multifaceted adventure hub. Implementing these recommendations can transform the Lotus Tower into a Sri Lankan tourism gem, attracting global adventurers and solidifying the country's position as a leader in innovative and sustainable tourism.

Keywords: *Lotus Tower, Adventure Tourism, Diversification, Innovation, Sri Lanka*

Introduction

The enigmatic Lotus Tower, gracefully rising 356 meters above the bustling heart of Colombo, beckons both local and international visitors. However, despite its architectural marvel and symbolic significance, its full potential as a major tourist attraction within the Western Province remains relatively untapped. This paper aims to dissect the current promotional landscape surrounding the Lotus Tower, analyze its unique offerings as a tourism product, and propose actionable strategies to propel it to a prominent position within the vibrant Western Province travel circuit.

Current promotional efforts for the Lotus Tower paint a multifaceted picture. While digital campaigns highlight its panoramic views and cutting-edge technology, a disconnect exists between online hype and tangible visitor experiences. Physical advertising at the site itself is limited, failing to capture the attention of passing

tourists. This fragmented approach necessitates a unified strategy effectively communicating the tower's multifaceted appeal.

Beyond its captivating aesthetics, the Lotus Tower pulsates with tourism-centric potential. Its observation deck, boasting breathtaking 360-degree vistas of Colombo, surpasses anything currently offered in the Western Province. Imagine visitors marveling at the cityscape's kaleidoscope of colonial architecture, lush green spaces, and the sparkling coastline – an unparalleled perspective on Sri Lanka's urban heartbeat. Additionally, the tower's interactive multimedia exhibits delve into the country's rich cultural heritage, offering an immersive journey through history and tradition. This educational and enriching experience caters to the growing demand for authentic cultural engagement among modern travelers.

Moreover, the Lotus Tower seamlessly integrates with the diverse tourism tapestry of the Western Province. Its prime location in Beira Lake is within walking distance of historical landmarks, bustling markets, and vibrant entertainment hubs. This convenient proximity allows visitors to seamlessly weave the tower into their existing itineraries, enhancing their overall Colombo experience. Furthermore, the tower's potential as a venue for diverse events – from art exhibitions and concerts to educational workshops and conferences – can stimulate local businesses and inject dynamism into the city's cultural calendar.

The Western Province itself serves as a compelling reason for focusing promotional efforts on the Lotus Tower. As Sri Lanka's economic and cultural powerhouse, the region attracts a significant portion of tourist arrivals. Leveraging this existing influx of visitors opens a vast potential audience for the tower. Furthermore, the region's diverse tourism offerings, encompassing beaches, cultural attractions, and natural landscapes, can be strategically linked with the tower, creating a comprehensive vacation package that caters to varied interests.

In conclusion, the Lotus Tower stands poised to redefine Colombo's tourism landscape. Its potential as a captivating attraction, an educational treasure trove, and

a vibrant event space, coupled with its strategic location within the Western Province, demands a well-orchestrated promotional strategy. By bridging the gap between online hype and tangible experiences, we can unveil the true lotus tower, transforming this architectural masterpiece into a beacon for travelers worldwide, and enriching the tourism tapestry of the Western Province.

Literature Review: Unveiling the Adventure Potential of the Lotus Tower

The Lotus Tower, a towering landmark in Sri Lanka's Western Province, holds immense potential as an adventure tourist destination. This literature review examines existing research and tourism trends to explore how the tower can be strategically promoted to attract thrill-seekers and elevate Western Province's adventure tourism landscape.

Adventure Tourism: Definition and Growth

Adventure tourism encompasses activities that offer physical and psychological challenges, immersing travelers in nature and cultural experiences. Its global market is booming, driven by factors like rising disposable incomes, increased urbanization, and the desire for authentic experiences (UNWTO, 2017). This trend presents an opportunity for the Western Province, known for its beaches, historical sites, and diverse landscapes, to tap into a lucrative niche market.

Lotus Tower's Existing Draw and Potential

The Lotus Tower stands tall as a technological marvel and scenic vantage point. Existing research by Abeywardhana et al. (2020) highlights its architectural beauty and panoramic views, which attract both local and international visitors. However, its potential as an adventure hub largely remains unfulfilled.

Potential Adventure Activities and Challenges

Several studies, including one by Fernando and Wickramanayake (2019), suggest incorporating adrenaline-pumping activities like skydiving, rappelling, and zip-lining

integrated into the tower's structure. Others propose adventure-driven events like obstacle courses, climbing competitions, and rooftop yoga sessions (Jayasuriya & Gunawardhana, 2023). These activities must cater to diverse adventure levels, ensuring inclusivity and attracting a broader audience.

Marketing and Branding Strategies

Effective marketing is crucial for positioning the Lotus Tower as an adventure destination. Social media campaigns showcasing adrenaline-filled activities and testimonials from thrill-seekers can reach global audiences. Partnerships with adventure tourism companies and influencers can boost credibility and reach, as suggested by Silva and Weerakkody (2022). Branding the tower as an "Adventure Hub" or creating specific adventure-themed events can further solidify its image.

Conclusion

The Lotus Tower holds immense potential as a major adventure tourist destination in the Western Province. Existing research suggests a growing global appetite for adventure tourism, and the tower's unique structure and scenic location provide the perfect canvas for adrenaline-inducing activities. However, strategic planning, careful consideration of safety and sustainability, and effective marketing are key to unlocking this potential and attracting thrill-seekers to the Western Province. By capitalizing on the Lotus Tower's untapped adventure potential, the Western Province can create a unique and exciting tourism experience, positioning itself as a premier destination for adventure enthusiasts.

Discussion - Beyond the Bungee: Expanding the Lotus Tower's Adventure Tourism Horizons

While the Lotus Tower's bungee jumping experience undoubtedly adds a thrilling element to its offerings, limiting its adventure tourism potential to this single activity

would be a missed opportunity. To truly captivate the hearts and adrenaline glands of diverse tourists, the tower needs to broaden its horizons and embrace a wider range of experiences. By drawing inspiration from successful adventure tourism initiatives in other countries, the Lotus Tower can blossom into a multi-faceted hub for excitement and exhilaration (Global Report on Adventure Tourism Organization (UNWTO) AM Reports, Volume Nine -Global Report on Adventure Tourism).

Scaling New Heights: Indoor Rock Climbing

Tokyo and the United States boast thriving indoor rock-climbing scenes, offering challenging routes and exhilarating climbs within controlled environments. Imagine replicating this concept within the Lotus Tower's spacious interior. Climbing walls of varying difficulty levels, catering to both novice thrill-seekers and seasoned climbers. This could be further enhanced by incorporating themed climbing areas, like a Sri Lankan jungle wall or a historical cityscapes cape, adding a unique cultural twist to the experience. Such an addition would not only cater to the growing demand for indoor climbing experiences but also synergize with the tower's focus on showcasing Sri Lankan heritage.

Soaring with the Wind: Indoor Skydiving

Dubai's iFly indoor skydiving facilities in Miraflores and Singapore offer a taste of the exhilarating sensation of freefall without the risks of jumping from a plane. (Indoor Skydiving at iFly Sentosa Singapore in Singapore | Pelago) (IFLY Indoor Skydiving, 2015)

The Lotus Tower could replicate this success by establishing its indoor skydiving chamber. Imagine the thrill of guests experiencing the rush of wind and the feeling of weightlessness within a controlled environment, all while enjoying breathtaking views of Colombo from the tower's vantage point.

This activity would cater to a broader range of visitors, including those with reservations about traditional skydiving, and would further solidify the Lotus Tower's reputation as a destination for pushing boundaries and embracing new experiences.

Walking on Air: Sky View Edge Wall

Dubai's Sky View Edge Walk, located at the Address View Twin Hotel, takes the concept of sightseeing to a whole new level. Guests, secured with harnesses, walk along a ledge on the exterior of the building, offering unparalleled panoramic views and a heart-pounding sense of exposure. The Lotus Tower could create a similar experience by establishing its edge walk section, perhaps along the observation deck's outer perimeter.

Imagine visitors carefully stepping onto a glass walkway suspended hundreds of meters above the city, their senses overwhelmed by the breathtaking panorama and the exhilarating feeling of being suspended in mid-air. This would be an exclusive, once-in-a-lifetime experience that would attract adventure enthusiasts from around the world and solidify the Lotus Tower's position as a must-visit destination for those seeking the ultimate adrenaline rush.

Beyond the Activities: A Holistic Approach

It's important to remember that adventure tourism is not solely about adrenaline-pumping activities. To truly thrive, the Lotus Tower needs to adopt a holistic approach that encompasses various aspects of the visitor experience. This includes:

- **Storytelling:** Weaving narratives around the activities, highlighting the cultural significance of the tower and its connection to Sri Lanka's heritage.
- **Technology:** Utilizing cutting-edge technology to enhance the experience, such as virtual reality simulations or interactive displays that provide in-depth information about the activities and the surrounding city.

- **Safety and Security:** Prioritizing the safety and well-being of visitors by implementing rigorous safety protocols and employing trained professionals.
- **Sustainability:** Incorporating sustainable practices into the operation of the activities, minimizing environmental impact and promoting responsible tourism.

By embracing these elements and drawing inspiration from successful international models, the Lotus Tower can transform itself from a single-activity attraction into a multifaceted adventure tourism hub. This will not only attract a wider range of visitors but also position Sri Lanka as a destination at the forefront of innovative and thrilling tourism experiences.

Remember, the key lies in understanding the evolving desires of tourists who seek unique, authentic, and exhilarating experiences. By offering a diverse range of adventure activities, the Lotus Tower can cater to these desires and become a shining symbol of Sri Lanka's vibrant tourism landscape.

Conclusion: A Future of Thrills Awaits the Lotus Tower

The Lotus Tower, with its architectural grandeur and symbolic significance, possesses the potential to be a major tourist attraction in Sri Lanka's Western Province. However, the current promotional focus on bungee jumping alone underutilizes its diverse capabilities. Our analysis of successful adventure tourism initiatives in other countries, including indoor rock climbing, indoor skydiving, and edge walking, reveals exciting possibilities for the Lotus Tower.

To fully realize this potential, a multifaceted approach is essential. Implementing activities inspired by international models, while incorporating Sri Lankan cultural narratives and technological advancements, can create a unique and captivating experience. Prioritizing safety, sustainability, and storytelling alongside these elements will further enhance the visitor experience.

However, translating these suggestions into tangible outcomes requires further exploration. Conducting feasibility studies to assess the costs, technical requirements, and potential visitor interest for each activity is crucial. Additionally, engaging with local stakeholders, including tourism operators, adventure sports professionals, and cultural experts, can provide valuable insights and ensure the activities resonate with Sri Lankan culture and traditions.

By systematically exploring these new ideas and fostering collaborative dialogues, the Lotus Tower can embark on a transformative journey. It can evolve beyond a singular thrill destination to become a vibrant hub for diverse adventure experiences, enriching the tourism landscape of the Western Province and attracting visitors from around the world. As the tower ascends beyond its current limitations, it can truly blossom into a symbol of Sri Lanka's dynamism and its commitment to captivating the hearts and minds of its guests.

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