

**Extended Abstract**  
**International Symposium of Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka (ICSUSL) - 2017**

**Potential for the Promotion of Food Tourism in *Galle Face-Colombo*,**

**1. Abstract**

Sri Lanka is a country well known for tourism, hospitality, and other tourism related activities. However, there is an increasing trend of tourists' arrivals and decreasing pattern of tourists staying nights in the country. As tourists are encouraged to stay a few nights in the country, promotion of short term tourism experiences for the tourists will be an effective utilization of the available natural and man-made resources for the treasure of tourism industry. In order to suggest an effective conceptual framework, questionnaire method was used to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats associated with *Galle Face*. Convenience sampling which is a non-random sampling technique has been used to select the sample. The questionnaire was the main source of primary data collection as well as secondary data were referred in order to facilitate the background of the study. Descriptive statistics, SWOT analysis, and chisquare test were used to analyze data with the assistance of SPSS version 21.0 and Microsoft Excel 2010. The results of the study identified that most of the customers are aware of *Galle Face* as a beach and a play area. None of the customers as well as tourists tended to visit *Galle Face* due to popularity of its foods, but the majority of the customers buy some street foods from the street vendors. Similarly, the research identified that there is a huge opportunity to improve *Galle Face* as a destination for Food Tourism.

**Keywords:** Destination, Food Tourism, Galle Face

**2. Introduction and research problem/issue**

Sri Lanka is an upcoming tourist destination since independence from the British in 1948. Sri Lanka Tourism has engaged in attracting tourists to the island by promoting tourism related activities, facilities, events, and organizations. Over the decades Sri Lanka Tourism improved qualitatively and quantitatively in terms of the categories of pristine, heritage, thrills, wild, bliss, scenic, essence and festive. However when comparing Sri Lanka Tourism with the interests of World Tourism aspects, there can be seen emerging tourists interests on tasting different foods. As Sri Lanka is known as a multi religious, multi ethnic, and multi-cultural country, there are traditional foods, seasonal foods etc., especially a variety of food cultures belonging to variety of regions and nationalities. The study emphasizes on developing a conceptual framework in

promoting food tourism or culinary tourism in Sri Lanka with special focus on "Galle Face" which is close to Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka.

Culture is an embodiment of a people's traditions and ways of life and it constitutes food, rituals, dances, festivals, sculptures, building designs, religion, dressing and other practices. Food is known as a component of culture. Culinary tourism is a subset of agricultural tourism that focuses specifically on the enjoyment of prepared food and drink. Sri Lanka, as a country with variety of food products, has the potential to brand traditional, seasonal, cultural, and other unique foods with its own language where the quality, taste, hospitality, appearance, etc. may complete the branding process in order to make the brand of Sri Lankan foods in World Tourism. Food along with the other components such as religion, events, festivals, and architecture is considered to be gray zone of cultural and heritage tourism which serves as a substance in enhancing the tourists' experiences at the destinations.

**3. Research Methodology**

This paper exploits a case study approach emphasizing relevant literature related to culinary tourism as well as observations at *Galle Face*, Colombo-Sri Lanka. The main objective of this study is to develop a conceptual framework for promoting food tourism as identifying *Galle Face* as a tourist destination which can contribute to sustainable tourism development while contributing to National economy of Sri Lanka.

Thereby, the research questions emerged are; what is the role of food tourism as a part of cultural tourism and its impact on the economy, why culinary tourism is important, and what are the potential roles of food tourism in *Galle Face*. In order to address the above questions, a SWOT analysis has been taken into consideration with the use of an opinion survey among the customers at street vendors at *Galle Face*. Convenience sampling has been used to select the sample which is a non-random sampling technique. The questionnaire was the main source of primary data collection while the secondary data were referred in order to facilitate the background for the study. Descriptive statistics, SWOT analysis, and chi-square test were used to analyze data with the assistance of SPSS version 21.0 and Microsoft Excel 2010.

#### 4. Results and findings

With reference to the data analysis from the opinion survey conducted among randomly selected local and foreign tourists, most of the customers stated the awareness of *Galle Face* as a beach and a play area. None of the customers as well as

tourists tended to visit *Galle Face* due to the popularity of its foods, but the majority of the customers among selected 60 tourists buy some street foods from the street vendors and it is recorded as 90 percent of customers. Among them, 59 percent of customers were female and the rest of 31 percent of customers was male. Customer's opinion towards having food tourism in *Galle Face* with reference to availability, quality and value of money are 58 percent, 75 percent and 88 percent respectively. The most preferable food stall is fast foods which are recorded as 67 percent and the least preferable type of stall is traditional foods. This may be due to the lack of facilities to dine-in. As *Galle Face* is identified as a potential to promote food tourism, the SWOT analysis was carried out in order to develop the conceptual framework in promoting *Galle Face* as a tourist attraction especially for a wide variety of foods.

When considering the strengths in promoting *Galle Face* as a tourists' destination for food tourism, it was identified that the *Galle Face* is a well maintained area and an unspoiled destination which is regularly under maintenance. Also *Galle Face* is with a preferable environment for tourists and local travellers at any age where it can be a power to enrich the tourists' base at *Galle Face*. There is a collection of food manufacturing companies in the country that can be encouraged to be an active part of promoting food tourism in *Galle Face*. Also a wide variety of foods and diverse product mixes relevant to specific regions, religions, festivals, races, etc. are strengths in promoting food tourism in Sri Lanka.

On the same time the weaknesses in promoting food tourism can be identified as the lack of strategies with responsible parties and effective involvement on their part, the lack of researches to support decision making towards food tourism. Also inconsistency in marketing campaigns and procedures for food tourism and the lack of quality framework for food tourism seems as drawbacks in promoting food tourism in *Galle Face*.

The above mentioned strengths and weaknesses that emerge internally deal with the opportunities and threats from external. Improving customer interest towards tourism related activities and appreciation of locally produced goods are at a high level. Also, there can be seen an increased tourists' attraction and arrival to the country where they are interested in quick travels. Another main opportunity for Sri Lanka to promote food tourism is the possibility to brand Sri Lankan foods in the world market with the brands that are already in the world market.

At the same time, the inability to deliver tangible benefits to stakeholders and inability to identify consumer demand for the food products remain as threats for promoting food tourism in *Galle Face* Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Colombo can be identified as a tourist hub where almost all the tourists arrive to the country should disseminate through Colombo, and thereby *Galle Face* can be promoted as a tourist's destination, especially identifying the lack of opportunity to tourists to experience the variety of foods in Sri Lanka. The main consideration should be on destination marketing in order to develop *Galle Face* as a place with culinary tourism.

#### 5. Conclusions, implications and significance

The *Galle Face* is a five hectare ocean-side urban park, which stretches a half kilometer along the coast, in the heart of the financial and business district of Colombo, Sri Lanka. *Galle Face* could be identified as a destination which has a combination of strength and opportunities as well as weaknesses and threats too. The recommendation is to develop a well-designed conceptual framework and appropriate policy changes to make the maximum utilization of *Galle Face*, with its natural and man-made tourism environment.

#### 6. References (Selected)

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