



Operational Issues and Challenges of Environmental Management System in Tourist Hotels in Sri Lanka

Thamal R De Silva^{1,*}, Athula C Gnanapala²

^{1,2}Department of Tourism Management, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka

*thamal.ravindudesilva@yahoo.com

Environmental Management System plays a pivotal role in tourist hotels in Sri Lanka because this system has enabled the tourist hotels to ensure sustainable operation in the tourism industry with a consistent and comprehensive focus on water, electricity and solid waste management. However, it is known fact that issues and challenges are arisen during the operation of any system. This research shows the significance of identifying the operational issues and challenges of environmental management system in tourist hotels in Sri Lanka. Multiple case study approach was used for the research. Primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews in three ISO 14001 certified classified tourist hotels and one ISO 14001 unclassified tourist hotel in Sri Lanka. The Researcher selected the four tourist hotels because the researcher was able to identify clearly in the preliminary survey that most of participants had a fear of corporate espionage because the tourist hotels are under impression that the sensitive information might be leaked to their rivalries. Therefore, the researcher has to purposefully select the interviewees who can provide the best information.

It was found out that guest behaviour, staff behaviour, building structure and natural challenges are the main operational issues and challenges associated with Environment Management System of tourist hotels in Sri Lanka in areas of water and electricity consumption and solid waste management. In the case of natural challenges, humidity, floods and drought are major natural causes. Other operational issues and challenges identified in this researcher were lack of Eco-licensed contractors, tree root intrusion, hardness and salinity. The actions already taken to mitigate the issues and challenges have been successful to certain extent but the actions have not yet been able to mitigate the issues and challenges to a greater extent.

The researchers' interpretations are based on the information provided by the interviewees and public documents. So, the findings are difficult to generalize across industries and are best suited for hotels of similar characteristics. This research aims to fills the dearth of research related to the operational issues and challenges of environmental management system in tourist hotels in a developing country's context. The findings will be particularly useful for hotels of similar characteristics in the case of adopting and developing efficient and effective environmental management system in tourist hotels in Sri Lanka.