

CEYLON TEA BASED TOURISM AS A BOOST FOR TOURISM DIVERSIFICATION IN SRI LANKA

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There is an unbreakable bond in between Tourism and Ceylon tea since the tourism was introduced to the Sri Lanka. Ceylon tea plays a leading role among the Sri Lanka's top five foreign income. This marvelous combination giving an admirable unique experience to the tourists as a refreshingly Ceylon cup of tea. A fresh approach has been to promote the Ceylon tea as a wonderful beverage among tourists. Therefore, the focus of this paper is to investigate Ceylon tea tourism as a fresh and effective approach in order to diversify Sri Lankan tourism industry. To achieve this motive, the researchers explored a sample of 05 local people and 05 foreigners in Nuwara Eliya in Sri Lanka. The survey was conducted as an exploratory study highlighting. The study was based on both primary and secondary data including observations, interviews, structured questionnaire, books, magazines, tour itineraries & etc. The results of the study revealed as Sri Lanka is holding a very rich heritage since the decades to the tea production, Ceylon tea estates are breathtakingly favorite destinations especially among the tourists who are interested in Ceylon tea. Central highlands of the country which can be called as the golden valley of the hill country, specially situated in and around Nuwara Eliya really catching the attraction of local and foreign tourists. Tea plantations like Halpewatte and Labookelle situated in and around central Sri Lanka provide tea trails, tea tasting, introducing the tea production process from very beginning to the end and various blends of Ceylon Tea to the tourists. The Hantana tea museum provides the tea manufacturing process, remembering pioneers of the industry, a library, and a souvenir and a tea shop for Ceylon tea enthusiasts. Ceylon tea based tourism in Sri Lanka has become a heaven for the tea tourists. In future the Ceylon tea based tourism will be enhanced more by identifications of its potentials for the future tourism industry.

Keywords: *Ceylon, Sri Lanka, Tea, Tourism, Tourists*