

CONSTRAINTS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL TOURISM WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO INGIRIYA

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Abstract

Ingiriya is a developing town located in the western province of Sri Lanka. Between the administrative boundaries of Western province and Sabaragamuwa province, Ingiriya town has created as a nucleated settlement. The topography and the drainage pattern of the area have influenced for the attractive landscape created in Ingiriya. The river Kalu is the source of this drainage pattern. The metric map of the area clearly shows the rolling terrain and monadnocks or isolated hills to the eastward of Ingiriya. There are specific landscapes that have already attracted domestic tourists in the country. These landscapes are including Nachchimale, Madakada Aranya senasanaya, Paraithota, Dombagskanda forest reserve (Bodhinagala Aranya senasanaya), Bodhinagala bird reserve, Horakele reserve, Kura uda ella and Mawak oya. Though these landscapes are attractive, have obtained a less attention value as tourist destinations. These landscapes have the potential to develop rural tourism in the area while expanding the area into a developed service area. However, the rural tourism has not highly raised in Ingiriya. Therefore it is necessary to identify the constraints affect the development of rural tourism in the area which blocks regional development. The main objective of the study was to evaluate the constraints on the development of rural tourism in Ingiriya. In order to fulfil the objective of the study, two sub-objectives were assessed too. The study has used a structured questionnaire survey for villagers to identify the constraints on rural tourism development. Water samples were collected to study the suitability of landscapes for tourism. Applying Leopold analysis method identified the most suitable landscapes for rural tourism in Ingiriya. SWOT analysis and Stakeholder analysis have also done to highlight the constraints where the stakeholder matrix prepared to identify the key performance roles. SPSS and Ms excel used to analyse collected data. Aesthetic landscape value analysed via Leopold analysis method and ranked the areas. Accordingly, Nachchimale, Paraithota, Mawak Oya and Bodhinagala were the first four most suitable landscapes for rural tourism destinations. Overall study, has identified Nachchimale as the most appropriate landscape for the development of rural tourism in Ingiriya. The negative behavioural aspect of villagers was significant and act as one of the main constraints to develop these areas for rural tourism. Because of the highly fragile environment and hermitage surrounding, it is necessary to conserve these landscapes without any disturbance. Less publicity and fewer quality services were another main constraints in Ingiriya. Both SWOT and Stakeholder analysis have revealed various constraints on the development of rural tourism. There was no any proper management plan for tourism in the area. As a result, some of the domestic tourist behaviours were not suitable for the society and the environment. Therefore the necessity of a rural tourism management plan was highly stressed with community participatory rural tourism management to change the behavioural aspect of both tourists and villagers. The most primary strategic activity was the proper publicity to disseminate the information on these destinations. The expansion and development of the service area also identified to develop these landscapes for rural tourism development.

Keywords: constraints, behaviour, landscape, Leopold analysis, rural tourism

Introduction

Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in developed as well as many more developing countries. The tourism phenomenon is an extraordinary occurrence, which developed historically from an activity of the privileged few to a mass cultural lifestyle (Hudman and Hawlins, 1989). This phenomena has become accepted as a basic need of the modern world. Mobilization is the main crux of the tourism activities, without this experience there would be no tourism. Tourism is synthesised from mass tourism to alternative tourism. Since this study focused on Rural Tourism (RT) it is important to

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express what alternative tourism is. Alternative tourism is referred to as 'special interest tourism' or in other words 'responsible tourism' and is usually taken to mean alternative tourism which gives emphasis on the contact and understanding of inhabitants' way of living and the local natural environment (Smith and Eadington, 1992). Mieczkowski (1995) identified few other specific forms of alternative tourism such forms as agro-tourism, adventure, cultural or heritage, scientific, rural along with ranch and farm subsets. The salient characteristics of alternative tourism are minimal environmental and social impacts, help to develop other sectors of the local economy and foster the involvement of local people as it is widely supported as being essential for sustainability. Accordingly, RT identified as one of the typologies of alternative tourism.

Rural tourism

RT has obtained immense significant development over the last two decades and has created a niche impact on tourists' mind as a special form of interests. RT dates back to the 'romanticism movement' that began in the late 18th century. Romanticism developed as a counter to industrialism began in the natural world. Lane in 2009 mentioned the first creative tours in rural areas were based on the holiday concept, but modern RT began after the World War second era. This movement influenced on the development of RT where bilateral aspect as demand and supply of the RT developed. Nulty (2004) showed the industrialization, urbanization and improvements in the means of transportation in Western societies as strategic phases that have directed people who wish for different calm experience to rural areas. The development is supply and demand sides are making RT more popular all around the world. There is various literary evidence that mentioned the development of RT. Sue (2011) broadly explained, RT has rapidly become a popular segment in China and contributed gross value added of 16 per cent to the English economy in 2013. The number of business and employment has also increased in rural areas about 29.9 per cent. As a result, turnover in rural areas also increased from 2003-2004 to 2009-2010 in England. Norway, Korea, Malaysia, India and Ireland are other most popular destinations of RT. So, this can be identified as a response to globalization (Daugstad, 2007). Among the first attempts, Bernard Lane was made an attempt to define the term 'rural tourism'. According to Lane (2009), pure RT is defined as a tourism type located in rural areas. Sharply and Roberts (2004) showed that this has a different scale, character and function. However, a diverse collection of definitions of RT existed in the literature (Table .1.).

Based on these definitions the complexity of RT can be identified where Konyves (2001) illustrated the system of definitions of RT (Fig.1.). Aref et al (2009) stated that this phenomenon can reinvigorate the conventional concepts and views of tourism and the potential to bring a new dimension to the sustainable development concept. Since this term composed of two terms as 'rural and 'tourism', the identification of rural aspect is also necessary when studying constraints on RT development. The term 'rural' is viewed differently from country to country (Robinson, 1990) however, Best and Rogers (1973) defined the term as 'rural lands under agriculture, forest and woodland, as well as an economic activity that is characterized by involvement of tourists who are facilitated by a set of tourist facilities. According to Frankenberg in OECD (1964) the notion of rural is the contrast of urban where significantly characterized (Table.2.), and symbolize the state of economy and development. As the same, RT has different connotations and meanings in different countries around the world where Nair *et al* (2015) have discussed the difference between the definitions of selected countries (Table.3.).

Van der Ploeg et al (2000) suggested an integrated RT model. RT and local economy both are interdependent and it is considered as a key strategic player for the regional development (Cawley and Gillmor, 2007; Saxena et al, 2007; Fleisher and Falenstein, 2000). The document 'tourism strategies and rural development' in 1994 aimed to examine and present the case for RT as a potential strategy to pull rural regions out of decline. This document stated (George et al, 2009) RT should be:

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- Located in rural areas
- Functionally rural, built upon the natural world's special features; small-scale business, open space, contact with nature and the natural world, heritage, traditional societies and traditional practices
- Rural in scale both in terms of buildings and settlements and therefore small-scale
- Traditional in character, growing slowly and organically, and therefore, small-scale
- Traditional in character, growing slowly and organically, and connected with local families.
- Sustainable in the sense that its development should help sustain the special rural character of an area, and in the sense that its development should be sustainable in its use of resources. RT should be seen as an urbanizing and development tool
- Of many different kinds, representing the complex pattern of the rural environment, economy and history

In this aspect, there are key factors responsible for the expansion of the scope of RT including, desire for escape from the monoculture of city living, increasing interest in outdoor recreation-ecotourism and special interest tourism, rural locations are ideal for relaxation and rejuvenation, over-familiarity and congestion with traditional tourist resorts, increased interests in alternative and off-beat attractions, curiosity for rural and its culture, customs and heritages, accessibility of rural areas, growing number of special interest tourists and a move towards short-break holidays.

RT in Sri Lanka

Rural areas have been started to be used for tourism based activities in developing countries after the 1960s (Perales, 2002). Tourism in Sri Lanka has a long history (Miththapala, 2010). However, the country is said to have officially entered the tourism industry in the 1960s -1970s (Ranasinghe and Deshapariya, 2010). Currently, typologies of tourism are also growing in the country. The alternative tourism has identified as a tool for rural development in the country. However, in Sri Lanka government investment is inadequate in the development of RT. During the 2007-2009 the investment for RT development was 60 million LKR where this has increased to 75 million and 90 million LKR in 2010-2012 and 2013-2016 period respectively. Comparing to the total investment for new resort development and tourism marketing and promotion at the end of the year 2016, RT development was the least invested major intervention (Ministry of finance and planning, 2006). Therefore, this has created several problems on triangulated relationship in the RT. Though it seems, a few RT development projects in the country evidence for its success. If for instance, Rakawa community-based tourism development, Padavigampola homestay tourism village, Kudawa community-based tourism and Walawa nadee community-based tourism. The sustainability of these RT project unable to identify now. Some other places such as Meemure, Riverstan, some parts of Mannar, Jaffna and Delft are becoming popular destinations of RT. Past governments of the country have identified few other places for RT development particularly places located in Kalutara district. Ingiriya was identified for this, however, there are few destinations popular among domestic tourists. They are Nachchimale, Madakada Aranya senasanaya, Paraithota, Dombagskanda forest reserve (Bodhinagala Aranya senasanaya), Bodhinagala bird reserve, Horakele reserve, Kura uda Ella and Mawak Oya (Fig.2.a.b. and c.). Though these rural landscapes are attractive, still the RT in the area has not well developed. Therefore, it is important to investigate the truth lying behind the backdrop of this endeavour.

Objective

To evaluate the constraints on the development of RT, this study investigates the root causes influence for the under-development of RT in Ingiriya. In order to achieve the objective of the study, attempt to achieve the following sub-objectives.

I. Identify most suitable destinations for RT development

II. Community perception towards the development of RT industry as well as the development of the area through RT

Methodology

The study has used diverse methods to collect primary data and a different method of analysis in order to fulfil the objective of the study. The study carried out in Ingiriya rural area (Fig.3). Ingiriya is located in the western province of Sri Lanka. Between the administrative boundaries of Western province and Sabaragamuwa province, Ingiriya town has created as a nucleated settlement demonstrating many patterns of settlements. The population has reached 55,133 in the year 2015 (<http://www.wikiwand.com/overview> , 2017). The topography and the drainage pattern of the area have influenced for the attractive landscape naturally created in Ingiriya. The river Kalu is the source of this drainage pattern (Fig.4.), where flooded during the south-western monsoons. The metric map of the area clearly shows the rolling terrain and monadnocks or isolated hills to the eastward of Ingiriya.

Data collection

A structured questionnaire survey was carried out to assess the community perception for randomly selected 100 individuals inhabited in the study areas. This sample consisted of villagers as well as those who act as stakeholders on the other hand. The suitability of destinations assessed having comprehensive and direct field observations. Each study area (Nachchimale, Pareithotha, Bodhinagala, Kura uda Ella, Horakele reserve and Mawak Oya) was studied under physical factors, biological and quality of water and factors of community interest and use to find out the most suitable destination for RT. Qualitative data was based on the personal perception while quantitative data obtained by measuring. Water samples were collected from each study area (Fig.5.) to study the water quality for tourism activities.

Data analysis

Field survey data analysed and ranked according to the Leopold method where the rank range from 1 to 5. There are 46 factors (Table.4.) to be considered when evaluating aesthetic and landscape value for Leopold method. All field data transform into quantitative data and calculate the total and the mean value of data and ranked them. The first three areas identified as the most suitable destinations for RT development.

Questionnaire data were collated and analysed by applying descriptive statistics. SWOT (Strength-Weakness-Organization-Threat) analysis and stakeholder analysis carried out to identify the constraints of development of RT. Collected water samples were analysed based on a few parameters such as EC (electric conductivity), pH, temperature, turbidity, BOD (biological oxygen demand) and COD (chemical oxygen demand).

Results and Discussion

Suitable destinations for RT

According to the Leopold method selected destinations were analysed. Based on the results the destinations were ranked and the first four destinations were identified as the most appropriate destinations for RT development in Ingiriya (Table.5). The highest average calculated in Nachchimale destination and this is the destination that should be given prioritize when implementing RT industry.

It is required a descriptive environment examination when implementing RT development through an environment and sustainable approach. Therefore, natural environment characteristics, status and quantity of natural attractions and environment area analysis have carried out. Natural environment characteristics are briefly discussed in section 3. Status and quantity of natural attractions assessed through the Leopold analysis.

Environment area analysis

Nachchimale or the Madakada forest is popular due to the hermitage, Nambapana creek and forest reserve. Forest reserve supply a diverse habitat for various medicinal plant species and six native plant species along with ten orchid species and fern species. Rare butterfly and fish species also reported in the area. *Puntius nigrofasciatus* and *Puntius cuningli*, are threatened fish species in the area. Native species such as *Otocryptis wieymanni*, *Lyriocephalus scutatus* and *Lankascincus fallax* can be seen while *Galloperdix bicalcata*, *Gallus lafayettii*, *Psittacula calthropae*, *Loriculus beryllinus*, *Pycnonotus melanicterus*, *Phodilus badius* and *Centropus chlororhynchos* are the other bird species observed in the area. This destination is located at the proximity to Paraithota, Mawak Oya and Bodhinagala.

Pareithota or Nambapana creek located close to the Madakada forest. This is popular among domestic tourists as a place for bathing which is a naturally created shallow pool. White-morph Indian Paradise flycatcher, Indian Pitta (*Pitta brachyuran*), Indian-paradise flycatcher are particular migrating bird species in the area. Bee honey is easy to find where tourism accommodation and food and beverage facilities also existed. Mawak Oya is a popular location for bathing and currently, a large number of domestic tourists arrive into the area. Oru riding is one specific tourist activity that has facilitated by the tourist hotels in the area.

Bodhinagala or the Dombagaskanda forest reserve is a small habitat consisted of a total of 178 species of vertebrate fauna and 82 species of invertebrate fauna. Of these species 38 are endemic whilst 10 are nationally threatened. 25 species of fishes which included the endangered and endemic *Lepidocephalichthys jonklaasi*, 17 species of amphibians inclusive of *Nannophrys ceylonensis* and *Ichthyophis glutinosus*, 38 species of reptiles including *Lyriocephalus scutatus* and *Trimeresurus trigonocephalus*, 78 species of birds including *Centropus chlororhynchus*, 20 species of mammals including *Rhinolophus rouxii* and *Semnopithecus vetulus*. 14 species of dragonflies and 68 species of butterflies including the endangered *Discophora lepida* are visible in the forest reserve (Sudasinghe et al, 2012). A total of 176 plant species identified among them 64 species are endemic. 30 orchid species and 32 fern species identified including 11 endemic orchid and 2 very rare fern species. *Dipterocarpaceae* is the prominent plant species where this forest consists of a reforested secondary forest of Pines and Albesia, marsh and swamps of the floodplain of the Kalu River and the natural forest. Maha hadaya and Kuda hadaya are two rare medicinal plants that can be seen in the forest.

Water quality of selected destinations

Since bathing is one of the main tourist activity the suitability of water resources for tourist activities were analysed. The pH and EC values of studied water sources were suitable for bathing (Fig .6. and 7.). High EC value identified in Mawak Oya due to sedimentation of mud with solid wastes. Though BOD levels (Fig.8.) were suitable COD levels (Fig.9.) of Nachchimale, Pareithota and Mawak Oya were higher than CEA parameters due to higher accumulation of garbage, industrial wastes and artificial fertilizer. Except Mawak Oya other destinations showed normal turbidity level (Fig.10.).

Constraints on the development of RT

SWOT analysis

SWOT analysis (Table.11.) revealed that resident attitudes were the most significant threat to develop RT industry in Ingiriya. Though the strengths were unique, the perception of villagers plays a crucial role against the RT development.

Stakeholder analysis

Since the RT industry has not established in the area appropriate stakeholders are unable to recognise. However, responsible persons and authorities were used to carry out the stakeholder analysis where the stakeholder matrix created (Fig.12.). Accordingly, the problems identified through the SWOT again proved by the stakeholder analysis (Table.6.). Divisional Secretariat (DS) identified as the key player among other stakeholders due to the work they have done for the survival of RT in the area. They have responded to some of the existing problems (Table.6.) associated with RT.

Factors and challenges that affect the backdrop of RT

The questionnaire survey revealed the RT development in Ingiriya is associated with a few specific issues, in turn, these issues are the factors that affect the backdrop of RT (Fig.13.). Environmental pollution was the prime issue reported (87 per cent) and 78 per cent of respondents reported the area is not suitable for RT as the less government attention (75 per cent) and thus there cannot be identified the spontaneous flow of tourists. 72 per cent claimed that the RT disturb the village life as there are some illegal activities (66 per cent) exists. Environmental pollution is the most common factor that affects for the backdrop in every selected destination (Fig.14, 15, 16 and 17.) while 100 per cent respondents mentioned Pareithota and Mawak Oya are the highly stressed due to environmental pollution. Inadequate infrastructure was highly stressed when it comes to Bodhinagala (Fig.17.). The study identified two main causes to have under-developed RT in Ingiriya. 60 per cent of respondents showed without having responsible authority to implement RT industry and less contribution from the government these destinations will ruin without properly managed RT industry. A total of six challenges associated with RT in Ingiriya identified for each destination showed different values. The identified six challenges were displeasure for tourism, an unsuitable behaviour of tourists, unfavourability/protest of villagers, disturb hermitage, loss of lives and water scarcity (Fig.18.). Pareithota was the only destination identified with water scarcity (Fig.20.). The perception of villagers, their unawareness of RT were the most difficult challenges to overcome as changing mentality of people is based on the direct participation of the government to implement responsible and properly manage RT in Ingiriya. When comparing the challenges associated with RT in each selected destination it is clear Mawak Oya has least challenges (Fig.21.) to overcome while Pareithota and Nachchimale (Fig.19.) both have overwhelmed with a negative perception of humans. Both Bodhinagala (Fig.22.) and Nachchimale disturb the hermitage calm surrounding therefore, proper management is necessary.

Conclusion

The results revealed that the most influential factor to stop the development of RT in Ingiriya was the perception of villagers. However, if there is a proper sustainable management plan to implement RT industry in the area as a 'win-win' approach, community participation and perception will positively influence. Since, the areas is a unique agglomeration of serene landscapes which opens a new window 'spiritual tourism' for the enhancement of RT in Ingiriya. Nachchimale, Pareithota, and Bodhinagal could be developed as a one tourism village to optimize the RT inputs in order to attain sustainable RT industry in Ingiriya.

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