

EXPLORING THE TYPES OF HARASSMENT FACED BY FOREIGN TOURISTS IN SRI LANKA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO WESTERN AND SOUTHERN PROVINCES

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Tourism in Sri Lanka is a largely contributing to the economic and social development of the country. This study is exploring the types of tourists harassment faced by foreign tourists in Sri Lanka with special reference to Western and Southern provinces. The study was conducted through a qualitative approach and data were collected through both semi-structured interviews and observation methods. The sample consisted of 53 participants representing people who were engaged in the tourism industry in Sri Lanka. It included 34 foreign tourists, 2 tourists police officers, 6 service providers, 9 tourists guides and 2 vendors. Convenience and purposive sampling methods were used to collect the data from August to October 2019. The collected data were analyzed by using thematic analysis. This study found that vendor harassment is the main type of harassment though it is a minor reported harassment type according to the tourist police reports. Further, service provider harassment, sexual harassment, drug peddling, cheating and theft were identified respectively under this study as harassment types. This study gives sound evidence that the country needs to pay the attention to minimize the tourist harassment issue and will explore the foundation to develop relevant policies to introduce to the tourism industry in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Complaints, harassment, tourism