

## **A COUNTRYSIDE CAPITALIZATION APPROACH TO SPIRITUAL TOURISM: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO RIDIGAMA, SRI LANKA**

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Spiritual tourism, including wellness tourism, was a rising global trend even before the pandemic. As the pandemic eases and the world gradually returns to international travel, places known for their spiritual energy and significance might become popular destinations. Therefore, this study focused on developing a sustainable spiritual tourism model by capitalizing on the resources in Ridigama. In order to construct the proposed model, this study adopted a situated-cognition approach to identify the spiritual landscapes, sociocultural/community landscapes and built & natural settings present in Ridigama village. Because of the village's religious landmark, Ridi Viharaya, the study's findings suggested that the Religious-Spiritual Tourism Continuum would form the basis of this model. The area's natural and sociocultural resources, however, have the potential to enhance the model's worth. As a result, it encompasses tours for religious education, yoga and meditation, stays in spiritual caves, tours of spiritual communities, and tours for spiritual aesthetics. In order to enhance value generation and sustainability, these model parameters have to be linked with ecotourism, historic tourism, and community tourism.

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