

SUSTAINABLE CAPITALIZATION OF RESOURCES ON MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM IN MUDALIWATTA, SRI LANKA

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In recent decades, mountains have become inseparable natural landscapes and community participation is an inevitable criterion of sustainable tourism. Although Sri Lanka embraces varieties of mountains and community landscapes, Mudaliwatta is one of the blessed landscapes of natural and human geographical resources. The study intended to explore the diverse natural and human geographic resources and the magnitude of Mountain Community-based Tourism (MCBT) for sustainable development in Mudaliwatta. Resource exploration and community interpretation led the study to adopt qualitative case approach to elucidate the diversity of resource bases and naturalistic interpretation of the community. Data were collected from the primary sources using focus groups, in-depth key informant interviews via judgmental sampling technique, observations, and artifacts. Empirical findings, narrative analysis of community interpretations through interviews, focus group discussions, observation and field notes reveal the mountain-based natural and cultural diversity of Mudaliwatta. The tangible and intangible heritage are adding further monumental values to the mountain landscape. Although prevailing conventional tourism embraces a shallow touch on natural and community landscapes, natural and human geographical resources have not been capitalized sustainably. In conclusion, Mudaliwatta inevitably demands MCBT to anticipate a wide range of tourism opportunities available for the local communities through sustainable capitalization of natural and human geographic resources. Developing and establishing the responsible MCBT value chain in mountain landscapes will help the local community to eradicate poverty while ensuring sustainable development.

Keywords: Mountain Ecosystem, Mountain Community, Mountain Community Based Tourism