

## **A Sociological Study on Identifying New Trends in the Foreign Travelling Industry of Sri Lanka, based on the Immigration & Emigration Department**

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Following the economic crisis and the Corona pandemic in Sri Lanka, the foreign travel industry has exhibited a significant recovery, experiencing its most substantial growth from January to April 2023. Therefore, Sri Lanka has a new hope to rejuvenate itself by identifying and addressing new trends towards the best and most competitive outcomes. The main objective of this research was to identify the new trends in the Sri Lankan foreign travel industry. The data collection for current research was based on interviews with foreign travelers who obtained service from the visa section of the Sri Lankan Immigration and Emigration Department within 3 days in May 2023. The data has been collected using a structured questionnaire with the participation of 25 purposely selected sample respondents. The data has been analysed using a SWOT analytical model, coding systems and using a conceptual framework. In addition to that SPSS software, Excel charts, and graphs are applied to further and clearer understanding about the findings. The findings confirmed that 29% of foreigners' who visit Sri Lanka plays a major role as Eco-tourists. The second finding is that 37% of them preferred to engage in environmental-related activities over their holiday vacation. These major findings convince that Sri Lanka is moving towards the concept of Eco-tourism as the best new trending opportunity in the tourism industry. However, there are no positive results showing the development of the paying-guest notion that has been introduced as a new concept in the Sri Lankan tourism sector. Therefore, Sri Lanka seems to be slowing in its adaptation to modernity in tourism industry compared to other competing countries. However, 88.89% of foreign travelers have shown positive impression of Sri Lanka as an attractive travel destination, while their ratings of services and facilities are also growing favorable. This study provides a clue that, Sri Lankan foreign travel industry has great potential to drive towards a sustainable future.

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