

REGENERATIVE TOURISM AS A CONCEPT OF THE FUTURE OF THE TRAVEL AND TOURISM INDUSTRY IN SRI LANKA

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1. Introduction

Regenerative tourism is an innovative approach that goes beyond sustainability with the purpose of transforming travel destinations to prosper while offering positive impacts. Sri Lanka, a nation rich in wildlife, biodiversity, and cultural legacy, regenerative tourism has huge potential for long-term, sustainable growth in the tourism industry. DMCs play a vital role in promoting regenerative practices that are profitable and sustainable for tourism. The objective of this study is to explore and evaluate the potential of regenerative tourism as a sustainable and resilient approach for the future of the tourism industry in Sri Lanka.

2. Research Methodology

The study used an inductive approach, following the interpretivism philosophy. In line with qualitative methodology, data was collected through observations and semi-structured interviews using the convenience sampling method. The sample included five tourists, 5 DMCs and three academics. The data was analyzed using Thematic analysis.

3. Findings and Discussion

The findings reveal that regenerative tourism is seen as the future of Sri Lanka's tourism industry, surpassing sustainability tourism. The study found that tourists seek ethical, eco-friendly travel experiences, with DMCs playing a crucial role in designing authentic, eco-friendly experiences. This study focuses on themes of Ecological restoration, Community empowerment, Economic sustainability, and Cultural preservation.

4. Conclusion and Implications

Even though regenerative tourism is a new concept, this study underscores the potential for Sri Lanka to position itself in future rather than sustainable tourism while identifying challenges like less infrastructure and awareness and opportunities like economic and tourism industry's growth and community engagement.

Keywords: DMCs, Economy, Regenerative tourism, Sustainability