

Srilanka a Favorite Tourist Destination Issues and Challenges faced by the Srilankan tourism Industry

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Abstract

Srilanka in recent past have emerged as a very fast growing tourist destination there are many reasons for this but the main reason being that, the tourist visiting Srilanka are motivated by the perception of beautiful virgin scenery, opportunities for sightseeing, and relaxed place of life. It is necessary therefore to take account of the global trends in tourism, which may have impact on the overall tourism in Srilanka The aim of this study is to examine the issues relevant to the development of tourism industry in Srilanka and the challenges that are faced by the Srilankan tourism industry.

Keywords: Tourism Industry, GDP

Introduction

Tourism Industry today is worlds one of the largest and the fastest growing industry, people throughout the world travel for many reasons but leisure, relaxation and enjoyment is considered to be the most important motivating factor for which tourist travel. There was a time when only elite classes could afford the luxury and privilege to travel globally but today things have changed since the standard of living of people in various developed and developing countries have gone up and with the advancement in the Technology and Transportation system, overseas holiday has come within the reach of middle and even working class this also accounts for the tremendous growth of tourism industry in the past four decades.

Today most of the tourist destination countries are developed economically due to the large amount of revenue generated because of tourism; these countries are now earning a large portion of national income from tourism and Srilanka being one of them. Presently Srilanka has developed necessary facilities to take care of the tourist but still there are certain issues and challenges that Srilanka tourism is facing today, this study tries to bring them in the limelight in order to support the growth and development of Srilankan tourism industry.

Research Questions and Problem Statement

1. Srilankan government needs to tackle the Environmental issues which may hamper Srilankas tourism in future.
2. Srilankan government needs to develop Human Resource for indigenous personnel, and for delivery of quality service.
3. Formation of government policy for developing tourism in Srilanka.

Theoretical Framework

Srilanka witnessed a strong upsurge in tourism after the end of the civil war in 2009. Tourism which forms 0.6% of the total GDP of the country, was one of the fastest growing sector in the economy, growing by 39.8% in 2010. With Srilanka being ranked at the first position in the “31 Places to go in 2010” published by the New York Times.

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The year 2011-2012 declared as “Visit Srilanka” year by the government the country witnessed record levels of tourist in the early months of 2011 and this trend continued for the remainder of the year.

Research Design

The study covers the scope, issues and challenges of the Srilankan tourism for which secondary data has been collected through Books, Journals, reports on tourism and websites.

Limitation of the Study

The area of study is restricted to Srilanka only for which data was collected from secondary source only.

Analysis and Discussion

For century’s Srilanka has been a great tourist destination, however 30 year since internal conflict and terrorism had a negative impact of tourism and the growth of the industry got stagnated. However after the end of the conflict in 2009 the country’s tourism prospects look promising,

What makes Srilanka a favorite tourist destination?

The advantage of Srilanka as a tourist destination is three fold. Firstly it is an authentic tourist destination. Secondly it is a compact island 65,610sqkm where a tourist can travel the length and breadth of the country within a few days, thirdly the diversity of the tourism product is unparalleled.

Being a island Srilanka is surrounded by sea and a perfect destination for a beach holiday when seas are rough on one side of the island it is calm waters on the other side .So it is a year round tourist destination.

Beach Destination

Apart from these beautiful beaches another advantage that Srilanka has is diversification Srilankan tourism also consist of other tourism products such as wildlife, heritage, scenic beauty, Ayurveda, yoga, meditation, festivals, sports and adventure and essence of Srilanka include what is unique to the country such as its people, art and culture, spices, tea gems, handicrafts.

Issues and Challenges Faced by the Srilankan Tourism

Negative Effects of Tourism on Environment of Sri Lanka.

Some of the negative effects on environment faced by Srilanka due to the growth and development of tourism are as follows.

1. Unauthorized construction and bill-boards, in places of scenic beauty.
2. Construction of telecommunication and television towers on mountain tops.
3. Water pollution in both marine and inland waterways due to discharge of effluence into sea.
4. Erosion caused to beaches due to unauthorized tourist installations.
5. Negative effects on fauna and flora due to construction in wild life reserves.

Development of Human Resource to Deliver Quality Service

The second major challenge of Srilanka’s tourism is the need to develop Human resources, particularly for delivering quality services to the tourists.

Another problem is that they lack the requisite to run the tourist business because of absence of modern techniques and quality service used by the travel agents for the tourist business.

Government Policy Affecting Tourism in Srilanka

Srilankan government have now started to realize that there are some Important issues relating to the growth, development and sustainability of tourism business in their country and so there are number of reasons that why the government of Srilanka should now think out of box about various issues pertaining to tourism.

Conclusion

Following the end of a three-decade long civil war in 2001, Srilanka has witnessed unprecented growth. With a real GDP growth rate of 8% in 2010, a jump of 125%

in Stock market in 2009, and 32% year-on-year growth in tourist arrivals in 2010, srilanka is on its way to becoming a major tourism destination in South Asia, this motivates us to anticipate Srilanka to emerge as a unique and successful tourism destination in the near future. There is also an anticipation of the strong demand growth in Srilanka with the expansion of the economy, influx of foreign investment, and development of infrastructure and tourism destination.

Suggestions

The following suggestion are suggested to improve the tourism of Srilanka.

The following steps can be taken by the Srilankan government to reduce the environmental issues which could be beneficial to Srilankas tourism.

1. Any development for tourist purposes in a nature reserve should be undertaken only to an extent where an imbalance is not caused to the eco system (plants, animals, life, water, human Settlements, sunlight, wind etc.
2. Development of particular hotel projects on a large scale in a tourist resort should be undertaken only to an extent where technological system would be able to minimize the negative effects on tourism.
3. In order to minimize noise-pollution, particularly from the movement of aircraft, international and domestic airports should be located away from the major cities.
4. Tourism boards and body's functioning in Srilanka should start awareness programmers to educate the community about the ill effects of bad practices of tourism on the environment of the country.
5. The government must be conscious about the importance of conserving the natural attractions of Srilanka not only due to ecological requirements but also due to the need to preserve these attractions, which are an important aspect of the heritage of Srilanka. Every effort should be taken by the government and the national tourist organization to ensure the conservation of the environment and its components.
6. Government and other bodies in Srilanka must work on developing and motivating trained manpower to take care of the tourism and hospitality services,

since tourist from all over the globe travel to Srilanka and they expect good and reliable service which could be only delivered by trained and skilled manpower.

Government's Intervention in Developing Tourism in Srilanka

Along with the development of new tourism destinations, the government must simultaneously place emphasis on infrastructure development, with the construction of airports, ports, roads and power plants. To ensure rapid growth in the future, tourism projects will need to be complemented with infrastructure development.

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