Research on the intangible ethnic tourism development after a civil war, based on stakeholder perspective: the case of Jaffna, Sri Lanka

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Abstract: The present study aims at identifying the stakeholders' perspectives on intangible ethnic tourism (IET) development in Jaffna, Sri Lanka, using stakeholder theory, which has been a missed area in the tourism literature. Interviews, discussions and participatory observations were used as key research tools during the data collection process. Content analysis was conducted using NVIVO software to analyse the data. The analysis of the stakeholders' perspectives emphasised that there is a huge IET potential in Jaffna which can contribute to the socio-economic development in the area. Although the stakeholders have mixed feelings towards IET development, their insights provide valuable directions for sustainable development of IET in Jaffna.

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1 Introduction

End of the three decades fought war in Sri Lanka opened up new avenues in country's tourism diversification strategies. Jaffna, the Northern capital of Sri Lanka, had limited connectivity to the rest of the word due to the long fought war. Jaffna District is primarily occupied by the Hindu Tamil minority, representing around 5% of the total population (Department of Census and Statistics, 2015). The destructive war not only affected the livelihood of the people but also the economy of both North and Eastern Provinces (Bandara, 2007; Weerathunga et al., 2019), but now being popularised as a domestic tourist destinations in Sri Lanka (Fernando and Jayawardena, 2013). However, Mathivathany and Sasitharan (2012) indicate that Jaffna tourism is at an infant stage and is poorly organised. As at now large scale resort type tourism developments are taking place in Jaffna with the expense of livelihood of other small sectors of the economy (Buultjens et al., 2015; Samarathunga and Cheng, 2019) without having a master plan. Many researchers have concluded that unplanned tourism brings the changes in cultures and traditions of local residents which is known as 'demonstration effect' (Brunt and Courtney, 1999; Fisher, 2004; Mcelroy and De Albuquerque, 1986; Monterrubio and Mendoza-Ontiveros, 2014). Urry (2002) in his book on 'Tourist Gaze' stated that allowing the markets to grow independently without being guided or monitored has the effect of destroying the very places which are the objects of the tourist gaze. Therefore, the practitioners and researchers have to look at sustainable ways of promoting tourism in new destinations like Jaffna. Generally, the economic and social development of the minority communities are low, and poverty is still a prominent problem, which is also true in the instance of Jaffna. In addition, it is argued that some minority people left in the periphery of national class systems entering into a capitalist market as members of an ethnic group rather than as members of national systems (Swain, 1993).

One of the main components of today's travels is to visit to the places of cultural significance (Kerstetter et al., 2001). Promotion of traditional cultures by National Tourism Organizations and the tourism industry is very common and has been identified as a profitable and a viable source to attract tourists and make profits out of that (Yang, 2007). One of the successful ways to promote traditional cultures as tourism attractions is ethnic tourism. Ethnic tourism refers to tourism that undertake by travellers in search of unique cultural experiences being practiced by a particular ethnic group that may include use of artefacts, performances, and other products or services in day today life (Yang, 2007). Many countries are using the competitive advantage of their unique cultures and launch ethnic tourism to boost local economies (Henderson, 2003; Smith, 1989). For instance, *Akha* tribal people in Thailand (Ishi, 2012; Trupp and Sunanta, 2017), Yunnan Ethnic Folk Village in China (Yang, 2011), Oizumi Brazilian town in Japan and Maori culture in New Zealand (Maruyama and Woosnam, 2015) are some of the successful destinations in which the tourists get the opportunity to experience authentic ethnic cultures. Visitation to destinations that are rich with intangible heritages for tourism purposes can also be identified as ethnic tourism (George, 2010). Jaffna Hindu intangible cultural practices and traditions include handicrafts and visual arts, culinary practices, social practices, rituals and festive events, music and the performing arts, oral traditions and expressions and finally, traditional knowledge (Samarathunga, 2016). Van den Berghe (1992) and George (2010) identified that intangible cultural tourism can generate significant economic benefits to the grass root level minority people if properly managed.

However, the present social modernisation has lead the Jaffna's intangible heritage to a great danger (Pieris, 2014).

Jaffna provides an excellent field for research studies on intangible cultural heritage of Tamil minority. Distinct cultural features of Jaffna and its tourism potentials awaits scholarly investigations to unearth both theoretical and empirical contributions to the field. Although there is ample literature recording the ethnic tourism attractions and impacts of ethnic tourism, limited researches have been carried out specifically to cultural representation in ethnic attractions (Bruner, 2005; Yang, 2011). Having cultural attractions alone is not sufficient to make a destination a popular. A representation of multi-sectorial agencies is needed since the inception. Bornhorst et al. (2010) argue that neither a single government agency, nor a standalone tourism enterprise can develop a successful tourism destination, instead, the collaboration of a variety stakeholders is important in tourism destination planning, decision making and management. According to Saito and Ruhanen (2017), stakeholder collaboration is usually complex and there are many factors contributing to the situation. Although importance of stakeholder involvement has been discussed in the literature, there is a perception in the tourism industry that stakeholder involvement is difficult or impossible to accomplish (Byrd, 2007). In addition, stakeholders' perspectives on intangible ethnic tourism (IET) development has totally being a missed area in ethnic tourism planning and development of literature. Ranasinghe (2018) also elucidates the importance carrying out further studies to understand how tourism development could be integrate in to local residents' aspirations and direct connection between living cultures and enhancing living standards through tourism activities. Perceptions, suggestions and opinions of the stakeholders are vital to understand and scrutinise during the tourism planning process, given the circumstances that the ethnic tourism is building upon the community heritage and the stakeholders are a vital sector in planning, development and management. Consequently, using stakeholder theory, this study tries to identify the stakeholders' perspectives on IET development potentials, contributions, perceptions and planning strategies for its development based upon an empirical research.

2   Literature review

2.1   Intangible ethnic tourism

Ethnic tourism has been employed by many countries to facilitate economic and cultural development and to assist in heritage preservation. The first used of the term 'ethnic tourism' is attributed to Smith (1989). He defined ethnic tourism as "marketed to the public in terms of the 'quaint' customs of indigenous and often exotic peoples". Ethnic tourism is tourism motivated by a visitor's search for exotic cultural experiences including the consumption of artefacts, performances, and other products or services (Yang, 2007), visiting ethnic villages, minority homes and ethnic theme parks, being involved in ethnic events and festivals, watching traditional dances or ceremonies, or merely shopping for ethnic handicrafts and souvenirs (Yang et al., 2006). Yang (2011) further identified, ethnic theme parks and folk villages as regular ethnic tourism attractions in the world. Ethnic tourism is closely associated with the tangible and intangible cultural assets of ethnic groups. Many scholars are in the opinion that tourism does not exist without a culture (Jafari, 1996). Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) was

initially defined as the living culture of human groups and communities (Williams, 1960). However, a clearer definition was driven by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). According to the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003), ICH is the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge and know-how, transmitted from generation to generation within communities, created and transformed continuously by them, depending on the environment and their interaction with nature and history. Bouchenaki (2003) stated that ICH is a blend of nature and history which provides communities a sense of identity and continuity. As per the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) the expressions of ICH includes: Handicrafts and visual arts; Gastronomy and culinary practices; Social practices, rituals and festive events; Music and the performing arts; Oral traditions and expressions; knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe. These six ICH categories have been highly referred by other scholars in their academic works including Copeland and Delmaire (2004), Kato (2007), George (2010), Lenzerini (2011), Oakes (1998), Samarathunga (2016) and Wood (1998).

2.2 *Impacts of ethnic tourism*

Many scholars (George, 2010; Harron and Weiler, 1992; Pitchford, 1995; Henderson, 2003; Oakes, 1998; Santos and Yan, 2008; Swain, 1989) reveal the positive consequences of ethnic tourism. Ethnic tourism is one of the community's hereditary cultural assets that earns a competitive advantage and uniqueness from all other communities (George, 2010). The major benefit identified by most of the scholars are economic benefits. It includes increased incomes, more employment opportunities, higher standard of living (Johnston, 1990; Smith, 1989; van den Berghe, 1992). Further, ethnic tourism brings individual benefits that includes improved self-awareness among local people, strengthening local identity through pride in local culture (Boissevain, 1996; Esman, 1984; Henderson, 2003; Johnston, 1990; Swain, 1990). Ethnic tourism imposes a strong effect on determining the cultural images of ethnic groups in many countries (van den Berghe and Keyes, 1984). At the same time, ethnic tourism helps strengthening the identity of ethnic groups through identifying and presenting substantial opportunities to exhibit different cultures, traditions and practices, languages and cultural pride (Boissevain, 1996; Pitchford, 1995; Santos and Yan, 2008; Swain, 1989; van den Berghe, 1992). Further, ethnic tourism will cause identification of ethnic minority groups by the main social structures (Hitchcock, 1999). In addition to that, according to Scheyvens (2002), tourism is a way through which a marginalised community can share their personal experiences and past mistakes (if any) with tourism. Henderson (2003) and MacCannell (1984) points out that tourism as a powerful force, enhances the awareness among the ethnic groups of their own traditions, which are less recognised by the outer world and promotes the restoration, conservation and recreation of ethnic characteristics that are dying out.

Many researchers (Henderson, 2003; Ryan and Aicken, 2005; Swain, 1989) highlighted the drawbacks of ethnic tourism. Ethnic tourism can adversely impact the culture, way of life and sense of identity of ethnic groups (Oakes, 1998; Picard and Wood, 1997; Smith, 1989). It is also possible that the host community feels some stress as ethnic tourism develops by being exposed to different cultures (Yang and Wall, 2009). Similarly, it has been argued that the tourists' undesirable demonstration effects on

resident leads the residents to imitate the tourists (MacNaught, 1982). Agreeing with MacNaught (1982), Fisher (2004) identifies three kinds of possible imitations among the host community that include: accurate imitation, inaccurate imitation and social learning. Other than the cultural exploitations, environmental destruction has also been cited by many scholars (Cohen, 1988; Greenwood, 1989; Oakes, 1998; Selwyn, 1996; Wood, 1998) along with economic exploitation (Britton, 1982; Mowforth and Munt, 1998) that caused due to ethnic tourism. In addition to that, problems associated with the staged authenticity and commodification have been closely linked to the impacts of ethnic tourism (Henderson, 2003; MacCannell, 1973; Volkman, 1990; Yang and Wall, 2009). Volkman (1990) further identified that the ethnic cultures are scrutinised, admired, photographed, and brought home by the tourists. Smith (2001) states ethnicity is frequently commodified and marketed to tourists. The marketing process of the cultural assets makes the hosts to change their perception about their cultures that will eventually create cultural erosion (Yang and Wall, 2009).

2.3   Stakeholder theory for ethnic tourism

The activities of modern businesses and enterprises are affecting to its stakeholders more than ever. Therefore, many scholars are researching about the relationship between the organisations and its impacts towards the stakeholders. The studies related to the stakeholders have given birth to the stakeholder theory. According to freeman (1984), stakeholder theory implies generation of value as a central driver of the enterprise, but it also recognises that this value is to be shared by a group of stakeholders that includes not only shareholders and managers but also all actors in society that may have an interest in how the firm operates. However, stakeholder theory cannot be limited to an organisation, but also to phenomenon including tourism. A stakeholder is identified as "any group or individual who can affect or is affected by" tourism development in an area (Freeman, 1984, p.46). Many researchers have emphasised the importance of stakeholder involvement in tourism planning and development (Markwick, 2000; Reed, 1997; Tosun, 2000). There are many stakeholders involved in general tourism planning development but not restricted to government officers, private investors, professionals, educationists, community members (Araujo and Bramwell, 1999; Yang and Wall, 2009). Wider representation and participation of different stakeholders are highly recommended at the grass-root level tourism planning since it has the power to mitigate any probable negative consequences that might arise in the future (Bertolin, 2002; Ryan, 2002;). Stakeholder theory evolves from this scenario. Although stakeholder theory does not address ethnic tourism directly, its implications provides valuable inputs to understand the stakeholders involved in ethnic tourism. Stakeholder concept has been highly used in tourism researches especially with respect to tourism planning, development and management perspectives (Araujo and Bramwell, 1999; Fennell and Przeclawski, 2003; Timothy and Tosun, 2003; Tosun, 2000). There have been many instances that tourism plans gone wrong with the pressure from the stakeholders. For example, a study conducted by Ioannides (1995) in Cyprus stated that the villagers in *Akmas* protested the government when the authorities decided to establish a national park in the area. Therefore, it is essential that the planners and policy makers consider the opinions of the stakeholders when developing tourism. Falck and Heblich (2007) also proposes that the managers should directly consider the interests of the stakeholders when developing strategies for tourism firms.

3 Methodology

This is a qualitative driven case study that employed exploratory data collection methods. Data were collected from Jaffna District during November and December of 2017 (see Figure 1). The working languages were Tamil and English with the assistance of a translator. Based on the stakeholder theory, the authors identified five main stakeholders involved in tourism development in Jaffna: community representatives, tourism professionals, academics, and representatives from government and non-government organisations.

Figure 1 Map of the research site (see online version for colours)
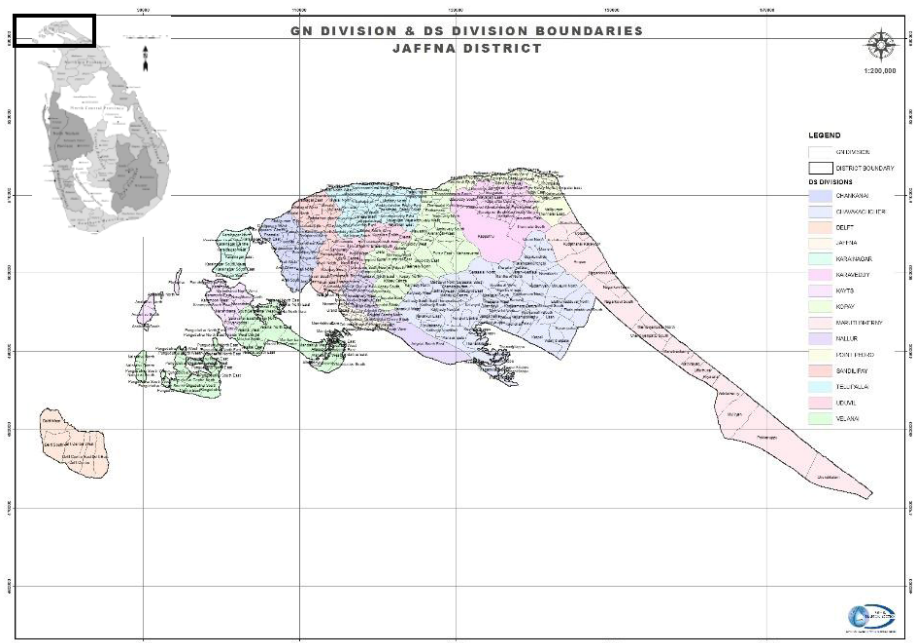
Source: Google images (2018)

Data triangulation method was employed to gather the data since it increase the reliability of the findings (Carter et al., 2014; Decrop, 1999; Thurmond, 2001). Therefore, to reach the research objectives different data sources were used: interviews, focus group discussions, participatory observation, and collection of documentary evidence. For the purposes of this study the authors selected an interviewee sample of 24 consisting of a variety of stakeholders in Northern Province of Sri Lanka. Although they are not the only stakeholders, they represent a variety of organisations and individuals who can offer varied ideas and arguments on the themes and issues emerged from the literature review. The responses were treated anonymously to maintain the confidentiality. Semi-structured questions were used during the interview process to acquire informants' perspectives on the development of IET. Questions concerning the exclusive intangible cultural practices, their contribution towards socio-cultural and economic development, local's perception of tourists' presence in a minority culture, and prerequisites to introduce ethnic tourism in Jaffna were the core interview questions. Each interview ranged from 30 min to 90 min.

Since this study attempts to identify the intangible cultural heritage that is embodied with life styles and traditions of an ethnic minority, participatory observation laid a good foundation to reach to the deep rooted cultures and traditions of the society. The researchers could participate on many social events including wedding, funeral ceremonies, religious festivals and sports events in Jaffna. Further to that, the visitation to the fishing harbours, farms, and even to the traditional houses and Hindu temples allowed the researchers to collect relevant data spontaneously. Whilst attending to the events, the researchers conducted focus group discussions. Focus group discussions were useful to get hold of 4–7 perspectives at once, especially with groups of community members. On average, the discussions lasted for 45–60 min. In most cases, fieldworks in the villages and personal responsibilities did not allow strict planning of interviews and discussions and people were randomly approached or forwarded to by means of snowballing. Total eight number of focus group discussions were conducted in eight selected villages in Jaffna District. Tourism destination marketing materials including magazines, brochures, video CDs and DVDs, books, and flyers were studied for additional insight into promotional tactics. Further, scholarly publications, tourism policies and plans, government reports and newspapers were examined to identify topics associated with the intangible cultural heritage tourism.

After understanding the nature of this study, the researcher employed content analysis method to analyse the data collected. Content analysis is a research method for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context, with the purpose of providing knowledge, new insights, a representation of facts and a practical guide to action (Krippendorff, 2004). NVIVO (version 11), a content analysis software, built using the grounded theory approach was used to analyse the data. Interview transcriptions, field notes, related documents and reports, images and videos were uploaded to the software and the strong coding function of NVIVO enabled the researcher to identify the common themes and patterns of the data collected.

The potential intangible attractions were reviewed according to the six dimensions of Intangible Cultural Heritage introduced by the UNESCO (2003). The ideas and perspectives expressed by individual interviewees were compared with the information received from the observations and focus group discussions with an ethnographical perspective. In order to limit personal and methodological biases, triangulation was used to neutralise bias and achieve convergence of results i.e., a particular phenomenon was investigated from different perceptions using different sources of data. The process involved exploring and analysing each transcript with respect to interviewees' knowledge, feelings and believes about various aspects of ethnic tourism. When the differences occurred in the results, the researchers revisited and re-discussed on the dominant issues with the selected interviewees. Finally, the themes were compared with the participatory observation results.

4   Results and discussion

4.1   *Intangible ethnic heritage of Jaffna Tamil people*

Certain dominant factors were emerged during the analysis of interview and discussion findings. The respondents had varied opinions about the first interview question raised. Majority of the stakeholders are in the opinion that traditional food and beverages,

religious event and handicrafts having a great potential to promote ethnic tourism in Jaffna. Yang et al. (2006) and Yang (2011) also affirmed that tourists identify enjoying ethnic food as a main activity during their visit to a cultural site. During the participatory observation it was identified some traditional cuisines which have a high demand among the local tourists as well as the few foreing tourists who were on site. *Thosai, Wadail, Idli, Jaffna Kool* (Figure 2), Fish *soothi*, *Paal Poriyal, Brinjal Poriyal,* Sweet *Appam* (Figure 2)*, Bone Rasam, Kulambu, Pulich Canji*, *Varai, Rosarian* Wine are some of the highlighting traditional cuisines in the Jaffna district. Also, it was observed a countless number of home made sweet items available in the public market that got much attention of the domestic tourists.

Figure 2   Jaffna *kool* (see online version for colours)

Source: Author (2018)

Maccannell (1973) suggested that, the tourist can obtain an authentic cultural experience by partaking at religious event. This idea has already been proved through the mega religious event '*Nallur* Festival' (see Figure 3).

Figure 3   *Nallur kandaswamy kovil* during the festival season (see online version for colours)

Source: Author (2018)

Although the festival is devoted in honour of the Hindu war God *Skanda*, thousands of local tourists visit Jaffna to witness the event. The *Nallur* Festival was highlighted during the interviews conducted with tourism professionals and academics.

> Nallur is an icon, a symbol of Jaffna Hindu culture. Annually we receive about hundred thousands of pilgrims both from Sri Lanka and abroad. (respondent 11, personal communication)

> Nallur festival can be promoted similar to Kandy Esala Festival which attract thousands of foreign tourists. (respondent 21, personal communication)

In most cases it has been argued that availability of attractions themselves not sufficient to develop tourism. Proper amenities should also be there. Following difficulties appear to be common during the *Nallur* festival season in the eye of the government officers.

> Lack of accommodation, water, parking facilities, restaurant and other convenient shopping are some of the problems we face during the Nallur festive season. (respondent 19, personal communication)

Traditional handicrafts are a backbone of the material culture of a community and often get the attention of the tourists (Guo and Sun, 2016). Jaffna is blessed with varieties of handicrafts (Figure 4) which are used for both domestic and commercial purposes. The items made out of the parts of *Palmyra* tree, especially with its leaves, have a remarkable demand even though there are many plastic alternatives available at a cheaper price. Many professionals in the field were in the opinion that the handicrafts industry should be further strengthened to serve different purposes of the tourists.

> We have to position Palmyra products, I mean the handicrafts, as take home souvenirs. Even our people can teach the tourists how to make them. (respondent 12, personal communication)

Figure 4   Handicrafts made out of *palmyra* leaves (see online version for colours)

Source: Authors (2018)

Music is the fourth intangible ethnic cultural item which has a tourism potential in Jaffna. Many stakeholders are in the opinion that traditional Hindu music and performing arts including *Bharatha Natyam*, *Vattakkalari, Onam, Panguni, Kaman* and *Indhira* can be

used in promoting ethnic tourism. Yang et al. (2013) also identified the capacity of traditional local music to impress the tourists in their research on 'ethnic minority tourism in China'. This theme was proven correct during the interviews with stakeholders along with a notable issue in developing music and performing arts as an attraction (Figure 5).

> Jaffna dance and music need to be treated as a unique experience that the tourists can enjoy. (respondent 15, personal communication)

> The southern local tourists are in a hurry to cover as much as places in Jaffna, thus they do not have time to enjoy our music. (respondent 11, personal communication)

However, when introducing traditional music and performing arts as tourist products certain modifications are inevitable. Thus, it is important to keep the authenticity of the attractions and meet the needs of the guests. Fine arts schools, colleges and universities have a bigger role to play in this regards.

Figure 5 Traditional performances in Jaffna (see online version for colours)

Source: Authors (2018)

Apart from above attractions, the interview process helped the researchers to identify further themes that have a certain tourism potential. They include social events (weddings), Stories (including legends and myths), traditional knowledge and Sports. Although they are valuable intangible assets, identifying them as tourism products at this stage of tourism development does not look wise. The focus should be on identifying key emerging themes and developing them as tourist attractions.

4.2 Contribution of intangible ethnic assets to the socio-cultural and economic development of Jaffna through tourism

All the intangible practices of a minority group contribute to construct and preserve ethnic identity alike. Yang (2011) mentions that exotic, more popular elements of a minority culture such as traditional architecture, bright minority clothing, happy dancing shows and festivals are highlighted in public display as positive expressions of

ethnic identity and are celebrated in shows for tourists. Jaffna is a destination with a well-preserved ethnic identity.

> Our identity was secured because we were remoted for nearly three decades. The unfortunate war however was a shield against unwanted changes, which is changing fast as at now. (respondent 18, personal communication)

A significant point raised here is that the Jaffna is being changed and being westernised. Following unwanted urbanisation one can observe destruction of social values and spread of illegal practices (Figure 6). Westernisation and social modernisation is often criticised of destruction of social value systems (Brunt and Courtney, 1999; Mcelroy and De Albuquerque, 1986) and tourism could be the solution to protect the ethnic identity. Swain (1993) and Ishi (2012) in their researches also highlighted tourism's potential to stand against unwanted westernisation and protect ethnic identity.

Figure 6   Destruction of social values and spread of illegal activities (see online version for colours)

Source: Authors (2018)

Yang and Wall (2015) identified that Ethnic tourism facilitates cross-cultural understanding. It includes hosts understanding guests' culture and guests understanding hosts' culture. When two cultures are met, true conciliation takes place. The interviewees came up with the idea that ethnic tourism improves cross-cultural understanding.

> We are happy to see how tourists experience and enjoy our food and beverages, our clothes, our languages, our traditions. (respondent 3, personal communication)

Ethnic tourism helps to promote history and culture. Having a great history and an interesting culture itself do not help to promote history and culture. Focus should be paid on developing the right tourism products that helps to promote the history and culture. Once the tourists started flocking in and after experiencing the available cultural practices

the cultures will have a better position in the wider society than it had before. However, it is important to make it available for the tourists to experience as per the tourism professionals.

> When the tourists get the opportunity to taste our food, live with the locals, and to take part in the cultural activities they will start learning and memorising our culture. (respondent 14, personal communication)

As reviewed in the literature section, tourism generates employment opportunities to the host region. Employment opportunities for the locals are generated in many related industries including souvenirs, entertainment, hospitality industry, tour guiding, transportation etc. (Figure 7). This was a well-researched area by the veteran scholars including Bao et al. (2015), Chen et al. (2013), Kruger and Verster (2001) and Van Veuren (2003). Introduction of IET will benefit the Jaffna community through employment generation.

> I think tourism will bring solutions to both poverty and unemployment in our area, and it will keep our youth at home without migrating to Colombo in search of jobs. (respondent 2, personal communication)

Figure 7   A shop run by locals selling sweet items closer to *naguleshwaram* temple (see online version for colours)

Source: Authors (2017)

On the other hand, the respondent stressed the fact that the potential employment opportunities should meet not only the economic needs of the residents, but also the self-esteem needs. Thus, the need of training and development emerges here.

> Sometimes the tourism jobs are not very appealing since most of the jobs are in operational level. There should be career development opportunities and motivation to be in the job for a long time. (respondent 16, personal communication)

Therefore, it is important to change the attitudes of the locals through conducting awareness programs, workshops and develop potential tourism managers and leaders through structured training programs. Full support of the community members is essential at this developing phase. The community support and right attitude is essential when implementing ethnic tourism in a rural setting (Maruyama and Woosnam, 2015).

Increased income is closely linked to the generation of employment opportunities. Once the communities are given new employment opportunities, it's obvious to see increased income of the families, which in turn increase the life style of the residents. The interview process enabled the researchers to identify this matter deeply. Better income is not only a result of direct employment opportunities, but also a result of development of supporting industries.

> Before tourism, we happened to sell our vegetables to middlemen who will sell them in Dambulla, Kandy or Colombo. Now that some hotels are directly buying some of our harvest. We want the hoteliers to buy all their fish, meat, vegetable, souvenir requirements from us. (respondent 6, personal communication)

Many researchers explored that ethnic tourism helps the host generation to have a better income. If tourism is introduced in planned manner, indirect and induced income opportunities will also be increased (Yang et al., 2006). Since ethnic tourism is woven around the people living at a destination, it can be ensured that they have both employment opportunities and an increased income.

Urban directed migration is one of the greatest issues faced by modern rural communities (Trupp and Sunanta, 2017). The men and women, alike, tend to migrate to urban areas or even to other countries for better prospects. This adversely affects for both development of the children and regional growth. Ethnic tourism has a potential to stop this unhealthy migration to urban areas by providing employment opportunities to the locals in their natural setting (Maruyama and Woosnam, 2015). The migration issue is often debated at both community and official levels.

> Mother goes abroad, father works in Colombo and children are with grandparents. If parents could stay at home children would have had a great time. (respondent 20, personal communication)

> Most of the younger generation, just after the school moves to Colombo in search of jobs. (respondent 06, personal communication)

During the interview process, three more themes emerge. They include: self-esteem through tourism and prevention against unwanted westernisation. Self-esteem can also be developed after developing ethnic tourism in a planned manner. When the tourists started coming to experience the cultural heritage, people will realise how important their culture had been. In addition to that, the present fast westernisation can also be controlled through ethnic tourism. Once the culture becomes a tourist attractions, people will have to maintain their own cultural practices to keep the tourists coming in. Eventually, unnecessary westernisation will be controlled.

4.3   *Local's perception about tourists' appearance in a minority culture*

People in Jaffna district have mixed feelings about the tourists' visitation to Jaffna. It could be due to the fact that Jaffna was remote from the rest of the country for almost three decades. Also, people ready to welcome the development through different means,

including tourism, however they are not willing to tolerate any changes in their social value system.

In the negative side, most of the interviewees had a fair knowledge on negative impacts of ethnic tourism. It has already been mentioned here that Jaffna tourism is at an infant stage with poor plans. Thus, community members do not have a deep understanding about the possible negative consequences. So, they look at mass tourism destinations and make conclusions about IET which is yet to be introduced.

> We have seeing how tourism works in places like Passikudah or Nilaveli, there are many prostitutes. Also, the young boys have addicted to drugs and many other illegal activities are taking place. We do not need such a situation here. (respondent 10, personal communication)

> Drugs and prostitution will definitely follow tourists. So we have to look at sustainable ways to promote tourism. (respondent 23, personal communication)

Many interviewees highlighted that tourism brings educational opportunities, especially the opportunity to learn foreign languages. In tourism literature, ethnic tourism has been credited for stimulating educational opportunities for the local residents including language learning and cross-cultural learning (Davis, 2005; Jackson, 2006). Yang et al. (2006) have also identified the need of educating the minority people to plant marketing and planning skills in them, so that they can grab opportunities, handle the challenges in the market and to ascertain the continuity of ethnic traditions. Fortunately, the Jaffna community has identified the educational opportunities that come with tourism.

> I also believe we can learn something from the tourists. At least their language. May be English, French or German. (respondent 3, personal communication)

The educational opportunities will not only come through the foreigners, but also through the government who has a wider responsibility about the members in the society.

> The government will definitely provide tourism related educational opportunities to the people including foreign languages and hotel operations. Actions have already been taken in this regards. (respondent 24, personal communication)

Tourism can assist in enhancing the global awareness of ethnic groups who are marginalised due to many internal and external forces (Henderson, 2003; MacCannell, 1984). IET has the potential to increase the global awareness of the residents in the host region. Global awareness is factors encompasses with environmental, social, cultural, political, and economic. IET will enhance the global awareness of the residents in Jaffna. The academic view point supports this argument.

> The arrival of the foreign tourists will create opportunities for the Jaffna people to mingle with them and as a result, the local residents' global awareness will be enhanced. (respondent 16, personal communication)

During the interviews many scholars and community members noted the possible social hazards that might arise due to ethnic tourism. One of such negative effects is cultural degradation. A number of other authors have also stressed the effect of cultural degradation in rural settings (Ryan and Aicken, 2005; Swain, 1989; Urbanowicz, 1989). Cultural degradation may occur due to the fact that rural communities accept the foreign cultures and trying to adopt in to them.

> We want tourism, but we are afraid of what comes with it. We have seen the things happening with tourism. After seeing tourists, our people might start copying tourists' behaviour and will change their religion, food habits, believes and values, social behaviour. (respondent 7, personal communication)

Therefore it is important to introduce IET more carefully to the sensitive areas without depleting its very original attractions.

4.4   *Prerequisites to introduce intangible ethnic tourism in Jaffna*

Both ethnic policies and tourism policies have to play a pivotal role when introducing ethnic tourism to Jaffna. Absence of such policies will make the planning process difficult. It is the state policies that should drive the local tourism (Zhang, 2003). Although government introduces ethnic policies, it is essential to evaluate the applicability of such policies in the local setting, because ethnicity could be vary from place to place. Thus, national ethnic policy should focus on creating independent areas empowered to adapt, modify, or supplement national policies according to local conditions (Sautman, 1999). Absence of ethnic tourism policies at the local level leaves the local planners at a challenging position.

> We do have tourism related policies but not ethnic tourism policies. So, all the tourism planning and developments are done within the existing general tourism policies. (respondent 21, personal communication)

> Developing ethnic policies adhering to the policies of the central government sometimes is very challenging. (respondent 20, personal communication)

Marketing and promotion efforts of cultural sites makes the destinations a success both in the short term and long term (Henderson, 2003). The cultural sites with intangible values are hard to market and difficult to differentiate. Marketing of such sites are known as 'tangibilising the intangible' (Black, 2005; Chacko, 1997). Jaffna has been marketed by the regional authorities for some years as a domestic tourist destination. Yet, there is no significant attempt made at promoting it internationally. Ethnic tourism will bring that opportunity for the marketers to position Jaffna as a destination with ample intangible attractions. It is a very positive sign that authorities are well aware of significance of destination marketing along with the problems associated with it.

> The modern marketing tools decide whether the destination going to be success or not. Therefore, without any hesitation we have to invest on marketing. (respondent 19, personal communication)

> The three main problems we facing are: to identify exactly what we have to promote, two, we do not have the technical expertise, three, we do not have the money. (respondent 23, personal communication)

Further to that, the professionals are also in the opinion of making an adequate effort on marketing and promotion efforts. However, due to the resource limitations of the community, the initial responsibility should be at the hands of the government, as per the respondents.

Whilst marketing has been identified as an essential element in tourism promotion, professionals, academics and authorities are also concerned about product development, which is a must in tourism planning (Inskeep, 1991). It is recommended of developing market-based tourism products in heritage tourism planning and development (Prentice and Duncan, 1994). Yang and Wall (2015) also emphasised the importance of tourism

product development on their paper on 'Planning for Ethnic Tourism'. Academics' directions provide a valuable input in ethnic tourism product development.

> All intangible assets cannot be converted in to tourism products. There should be a way to recognise the most applicable practices and they should be developed as tourism products. (respondent 17, personal communication)

The importance of training and development of the people involved in ethnic tourism signifies an investment. The first encounters are very much important to any business, thus, they should be properly trained to serve the tourists (Yang et al., 2006). However, it is the government's responsibility to train and educate the minority people on economic and tourism-related knowledge so as to help minority communities to meet with the changes involved in performing in a market economy, and to sustain the ethnic traditions (Yang and Wall, 2009). The community members have already identified the need of education and training.

> Our younger generation has no education other than that of school. Therefore, they need to be trained before asking them to work in the tourism industry. (respondent 8, personal communication)

A professional's opinion about the training implies that government also have to take the responsibility of the training where they are incompetent to attend.

> We are hoteliers and we can teach them only about hotel operations. We cannot teach them how to present their own culture. It's the responsibility of the relevant authorities. (respondent 13, personal communication)

> Although the main roads in Jaffna are developed, the other connecting roads in Jaffna are yet to be developed. Also, water, telecommunication are some other areas that need improvements. Many researchers including Idajatia (2014), Yang and Wall (2009), Yao et al. (2008) have identified the importance of having good infrastructure facilities at the destinations for the convenient of both residents and tourists. The theme of having proper infrastructure facilities were well emerged during the interviews with stakeholders.

> Foreign tourists will find it hard to visit our villages given the condition of our roads. Also, where can we perform for them? We are poor and our houses are too small and too old to welcome the guests. (respondent 7, personal communication)

> Before starting tourism we have to address the issues related to electricity, drinking water, accessibility etc. Tourism in a way, is an eye opener of the politicians to attend to these basic requirements of the people. (respondent 16, personal communication)

Two other themes were also discussed during the interview process. They include: involving the community and developing a 'cultural village'. According to the literature Guo and Sun (2016), Maruyama and Woosnam (2015), Swain (1993), identifies that villagers need to be actively involved in tourism since the inception of panning to the phase of implementation and controlling. The final theme, developing a cultural village, is a viable method implemented by many other countries in promoting their culture and heritage. Although planning and development of a cultural village involve lot of effort, it has been identified as a sustainable way to conserve the dying ethnic heritage in most countries (Landy, 2014).

5   Conclusion

During the recent past, ethnic tourism has been identified as an emerging research area. This paper focuses on stakeholders' perspectives on ethnic tourism development and explains how the stakeholder theory is being applied. From the interest of community members and leaders, academics, professionals, governmental and non-governmental officers, the paper also points out strategies related to IET development of Jaffna.

Although often neglected in the past, stakeholders are now being considered as vital agents in the process of sustainable tourism development (Scheyvens, 1999). According to Byrd (2007), the presence of stakeholders is a must in sustainable tourism development to avoid any potential conflicts. The findings are significant, because it provides the basis for several recommendations for future directions and ethnic tourism development of post-conflict destinations including Jaffna. Jaffna's intangible heritage dominates identification of its main attractions. Traditional cuisines are on the top of the list, followed by religious festivals, handicrafts and musical performances. In their researches Yang et al. (2006) and Yang (2011) also identified the potential of ethnic food to attract and entertain the tourists. Through the study conducted in Haut Plateau de l'Aubrac, Central France, Bessière (1998) also identified the attractiveness of ethnic food and beverages to attract the tourists. Further, a much broader study, which was carried out by Cohen and Avieli (2004) in the Middle Eastern region and South Asia, identified the pivotal role of traditional cuisines to attract and retain tourists in the region. The study also supports Maccannell (1973) findings on the importance of religious festivals for destination promotions. Cohen (1998), Bond et al. (2015) also identified the potential of promoting religious events as tourist attractions through the studies conducted around Christian Churches. Further to that, more evidence comes from China where Kang (2009) explored two temples and three religions which are being highly frequented by the tourists. Traditional handicrafts are a backbone of the material culture of a community and often get the attention of the tourists (Guo and Sun, 2016). Much studies have been carried out by global scholars on the importance of traditional handicrafts at a tourist destination. For instance, Dangjia ancient village in China (Guo and Sun, 2016), Maltese islands in Malta (Markwick, 2001), Jordanian tourist destinations (Mustafa, 2011) are few studies where traditional handicrafts are being promoted as a tourism product. The role of music as an intangible tourism asset, as identified in this study, do support many international findings in distinct rural societies. Yang et al. (2013) in their study on "Ethnic Minority Tourism in China", "Island Tourism Marketing of Cape Breton Island, Canada by Brown and Geddes (2007) and Brown (2009) and a study conducted about tourism in rural Irish villages in Dooling, Ireland by Kaul (2009) stand as strong evidences to prove the tourism potential of traditional music. Therefore it is evident that IET in Jaffna can be promoted through traditional cuisines, religious festivals, traditional handicrafts and musical performances with the support of the stakeholders.

The stakeholders have positive attitudes towards the development of IET considering its enormous contribution towards socio-economic development. They include: protection against unnecessary westernisation, facilitating cross-cultural understanding, promoting history and culture, employment and income generation, reduces the excessive migration. Further, the paper contributes for identification and assessment of the major issues associated with IET development. Some of the potential major issues linked with ethnic tourism includes spread of illegal drugs, prostitution, lack of infrastructure facilities, lack of proper policies and plans and finally, lack of professionals to manage

the tourism industry. However, Monterrubio and Mendoza-Ontiveros (2014) argue that westernisation and unnecessary modernisation also as causes for such social degradation.

The analysis also unearths the prerequisites for IET development that includes introduction of comprehensive regional policies and plans, tourism product development, training and development, infrastructure development and favourable attitude towards tourism among the community members. However, the said prerequisites are common to other developing destinations as well. Because of the criticisms against modern tourism that ignore the stakeholders' opinions on tourism developments (Markwick, 2000; Reed, 1997; Scheyvens, 1999; Tosun, 2000) it is important that stakeholders getting involved in tourism planning and development since the beginning. The tourism practitioners should get the support of the stakeholders after identifying their ability to represent a cross section of a wider society and they should be briefed on the growing concerns about the IET development. With the contribution of stakeholders only IET can be developed in a sustainable way. Whilst the tourism planners and practitioners can use these findings for tourism planning in Jaffna, the academia can further expand this research areas by trying to understand complexities in stakeholder theory, i.e., the different perspectives of different stakeholders regarding a common matter.

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