

An Evaluation of Adventure Tourism in the Kalani Riverbank with Reference to Visitor Expectation and Impacts on the Community

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Adventure tourism, a latest concept to the Sri Lankan Tourism Industry has growing demand for its eco-oriented activities in some of the locations. Stakeholders involving in the perspective of Eco-tourism has taken a greater interest to develop the Adventure Tourism in the Kalani Riverbank. The present study was to evaluate the market profile, visitor expectations and as to how these activities are in par with the eco-tourism policies in order for bringing community benefits. Sites selected in the study were, "Rafters Retreat" at Kithulgala, "Action Lanka" and "Adventure Center" at Yatiberiya. From the survey it was found that 63% of the visitors are foreigners and locals account for 37%. Germans and the Netherlands are the dominating foreigners and locals are mainly from Western province. It was found that promotional aspects by government and the private firms itself, has not been effective and only about 16% of the clients aware of the sites through medias. Of the activities organized by the adventure firms, White water rafting, Kayaking, Mountain cycling were most popular among both locals and foreigners. The age group of the visitors falls within the range of 21-41 years and males were much attracted. Visitors revealed that, security, training and instructions, information and accommodation facilities provided are satisfactory. Even though there are restriction to litter polypropylene bags and packaging materials at the sites, foreigners are not happy with the present manner of waste handling. Locals are not happy with the charges for white water rafting. Visitors are trained before engaging the activities and according to Managers; these trainers have been trained by the United Kingdom Adventure Guides and not by the Ceylon Tourist Board guides though prerequisite. The major drawback relating to the most popular activity, White water rafting, is that none of the adventure organizers in the Kalani riverbank has not obtain the Coxswain License which is mandatory to ensure safety. A considerable negative impacts on the community was observed; Tourist behaviour at the launching sites due to non existence of changing rooms, noise and the traffic disturbance were some of the complains. There is no visible economic benefits to the community by the visitors or by the adventure firms. Involvement of the community youth in the activities seemed to be negligible and most of the workers are from the outside the community. Therefore, Government mediated administrative framework and necessary Tourism Policies to be developed to ensure sustainability of the nature based activities at these sites.

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