

Exploring the Impact of Responsible Tourism on Stakeholders in Dambulla Tourism Destination

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According to the 2002 Cape Town declaration, tourism is defined as ‘which creates better places for people to live in, and better places to visit’. Responsible tourism considers economic, social and environmental aspects as the three pillars of tourism initiatives in the destinations, thus contributing to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. This study attempts to explore the impact of responsible tourism on stakeholders in the Dambulla tourism destination. There have been few studies carried out on this issue in Sri Lanka. The researcher identified environmental protection, risk awareness and environmental policies as independent variables and stakeholders as the dependent variable. Environment protection entails aspects of biodiversity management, waste management, and reduction of ecological stress, while risk awareness follows environmental risk, economical risk and social risk. Environmental policies are associated with environmental policies, standards and rules and regulations. Stakeholders espouse quality of life, support local economy and increasing reputation. Both primary and secondary data were used in this study. Primary data were collected by key persons’ interviews and questionnaire-based surveys. This study is based on data collected from 60 dwellers, 15 hotels and 5 government agencies. SPSS version 21 was used for the analysis, and descriptive analysis, multiple regression analysis, correlation analysis and were employed. The correlation analysis revealed the positive significant relationship among the variables. The multiple regression analysis indicated that environmental protection (Sig = 0.000) and Risk Awareness (Sig = 0.008) have positive and significant impact on stakeholders in Dambulla. Environmental Policies (Sig = 0.113) have an insignificant influence on stakeholders and this may be because of most stakeholders have low knowledge and awareness levels about environmental policies. This study will contribute to society in general, the tourism sector, decision-makers and policy makers to identify how responsible tourism impacts upon stakeholders with heterogeneous preferences.

Keywords: Environmental protection, Risk awareness, Environmental policies, Responsible tourism, Stakeholders