

**IMPACT OF ECOTOURISM ON LOCAL LIVELIHOOD  
AND ENVIRONMENT: EVIDENCE FROM SELECTED  
AREAS IN SRI LANKA**

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree  
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## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my own work and effort and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of the university or other institute of higher learning, except where due acknowledgment has been made in the text.

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## **CERTIFICATION**

This is to certify that this thesis submitted by R.R.N.N.Rathnaweera (Index number:158708M) in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the Degree of Master of Spatial Planning, Design and Management at the Department of Town and Country Planning of the University of Moratuwa is a record of the own work carried out by the student under my supervision. This thesis has been submitted with my approval.

.....  
Signature of the principal Supervisor

.....  
Date

.....  
Head of the Department

.....  
Date

Department of Town and Country Planning

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## **ABSTRACT**

Whether the Tourism industry generates many negative social and economical to the communities and environment it has become largest fastest growing industry of the world. Eco tourism can be identified as a rapidly growing part of the industry and branch of the sustainable tourism. Eco-tourism has been embraced by many developing countries with the realization that it could go a long way in improving their economy and uplifting the living standards of the people while protecting the environment and the cultural values. Sri Lanka has welcomed Eco-tourism to avoid negative impact generating from mass tourism.

Genuine ecotourism practices cannot be seen in the tourism generated areas in Sri Lanka. They are not aware of the real ecotourism principles. Ranpathwila, Kirelakele, Bundala and Sathurukondan are examples for failure eco-tourism projects which have not practicing principles. Hence it is needed to understand how ecotourism used as a tool to assure economic benefit to local community and contribution to the environment and bio diversity conservation of Sri Lanka. Therefore this research focus to understand subscription ecotourism to local people living in selected areas in Sri Lanka.

Kandalama Lake surrounding area of Mathale District, Heeloya in Mathale district and Ampitigala Madurawala in Kaluthara district were selected as the case study areas. These three are very famous tourism regions in Sri Lanka. Sample of this study consists of 310 families living in Kandalama, Heeloya and Madurawala areas in Sri Lanka. 148 families, 94 families, 68 families respectively selected from Kandalama, Madurawela and Heeloya to the sample. Data collecting was carried out through a questionnaire survey and interview with community members of the villages. Collected data was analyzed through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 21 version. Both qualitative and quantitative data analysis techniques including descriptive statistics, and Binary Regression analysis and narrative analysis were used for of this study.

Survey data shows that 20% of people in Madurawala, 12% of people in Heeloya and 5% of people in Kandalama were aware of the concept of eco-tourism. People in Madurawala and Heeloya have knowledge of concepts of ecotourism. Main livelihood activity is agriculture it

contributes 65% of the total sample. Considering the income level most of them are having low income from their main livelihood activity. But they earned additional income engaging ecotourism activity. There is evidence in Madurawala and Heeloya. Kandalama people are not engaging ecotourism. 7.1% of the sample engaged in supply of food and beverages which is the activity with highest percentage among ecotourism activities. Women empowerment and community empowerment can be identified in these areas. There is positive contribution regarding socio economic and infrastructure. According to the result it can say that people who are said that there will be an improvement in living standards of the local communities due to eco tourist activities since there is an improvement in Improves quality of life, facilitates meeting visitors, increase employment opportunities, Improves understanding of different communities as the believe.

This research revealed that Eco tourist's activities in Madurawala / Heeloya / Kandalama have positive contribution to conservation program and improving living condition of local community in near future.

Key words- Ecotourism, local community, local livelihood

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

Abbreviation	Description
CBJ	Community Based Tourism
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
CBE	Community Based Enterprises
SLEF	Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation
WTO	World tourism organization