

Abstract

In the context of tea industry in Sri Lanka, ecotourism has been recognized as an economically viable, environmentally friendly and socially acceptable non-crop diversification mechanism to increase profits. The purpose of this study was to assess the potential for ecotourism in Pundaluoya valley tea plantations in Sri Lanka. Four estates, namely

Dunsinane , Sheen, Ferndlands (Harrow) & North Meddacombra

Which are located in the Pundaluoya Valley were selected as the cases.

Collection of data was done by:

- (1) A field survey at each location to identify the availability of potential resources for ecotourism
- (2) A community survey with the estate households;
- (3) Personnel interviews with the estate management
- (4) Questionnaire-based surveys with potential local and foreign tourists to these estate sites.

The information collected through the field, community and management surveys was used to determine the capacity of each estate to ascertain the probability in developing an ecotourism on the estates. The results based on the finding suggested that the best locations for ecotourism are North Meddecombra & Ferndlands followed by Dunsinane and then Sheen. The results also show that about 82 percentage of the estate community was in favor of implementing an ecotourism project, and about 83 and 77 percentages of foreign and local tourists, respectively, are willing to visit such a project. The results highlight the necessity of implementing sustainable alternative projects to enhance the quality of life of the estate community as 86 percentage of estate community like to work on a sustainable Eco tourism Project.