

STAKEHOLDERS PARTICIPATION TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN GALLE FORT HERITAGE SITE 2014

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Key words: Heritage Site, Participation, Stakeholders, Sustainable Tourism

Introduction

As World Heritage Sites play key roles in tourist attraction in the World, Galle Fort World Heritage site, the largest colonial fortress city designed based on European urban plan is very important for Sri Lankan tourism. It became a unique tourist attraction by means of best preserved sea fort in South Asia with a small town within as a living fort situated in port. Unusual tourist attraction, activities of local community and foreign investments caused to commercialize the authentic residential environment in the fort. It is harmful for conservation of Outstanding Universal Value of the heritage in Galle Fort. This study aims to examine stakeholders' participation towards sustainable tourism development in Galle Fort Heritage Site, elucidate the value of Galle Fort World Heritage Cultural site and identify impacts towards the archaeological monuments cause from tourism activities.

Methodology

Population of this study was tourism stakeholders within Galle Fort Heritage Site. The sample of 30 stakeholders including residents, government officials, tourists and businessmen was taken employing stratified sampling

method. Both primary and secondary data were used. Interview questions were developed based on thesis questionnaire of Chansone Keomanivong (2009). The interview were recorded and transcribed based on interview questions. Valuable written documents were used for secondary data. Framework analysis was used to analyze data.

Findings of research

1) Stakeholders' contribution to the sustainable tourism development in Galle Fort Heritage Site

Cooper et al. (2008) explains sustainable development is quite broad area and it requires integration of economic, environmental and socio cultural components. Contribution towards to achieve sustainable tourism development was vary from one to another as follows.

Socio cultural aspect

- Organizing cultural events and promoting ancient traditional life style of Galle Fort via fine art approaches.
- Attracting quality tourists through centralized promotion based on cultural and heritage values.

- Refraining unsuitable usage of heritage buildings in the Fort.

Economical aspect

- Giving priority to traditional products in commercial premises.
- Standardizing the commercial activities in Galle Fort and form committees based on standardized business to address issues.
- Developing Home Stay Units in heritage buildings in Galle Fort.
- Providing specific business areas for mobile vendors in the Fort.

Environmental aspect

- Introducing a significant traffic policy to control traffic congestion, maintaining adequate parking areas and pedestrian roads
- Implementing proper garbage management system

Legal aspect

- Implementing strict laws and regulations for illegal constructions, building conservation, safety of stakeholders, selling properties to foreigners.
- Taking equal legal actions for each party
- Maintaining proper hierarchy to address complaints and response for matters

Educational aspect

- Launching awareness programs for stakeholders on sustainable tourism practices

Political aspects

- Accelerating proper hierarchy of power for implement specific projects

- Taking leadership
- Motivating stakeholders for sustainable tourism activities

Tourist satisfaction aspect

- Making unique cultural awareness
- Providing standard of price and quality for tourism products
- Maintaining well educated guiding services
- Establishing tourist information center

Conservation aspects

- Taking business community participation to maintain valuable architectural features of Galle Fort
- Providing static building plans for construction

Stakeholders expect government participation to take leadership for sustainable tourism activities. Residents and business owners need to maintain their buildings, renovate them in a recognized manner and expect proper guidelines and legal framework through government authorities. Business owners need to standardize businesses as tourist request quality services from them. It supports to develop tourist satisfaction, encourage revisit intention and enhance the reputation of Galle Fort.

Values of Gall Fort Heritage site

Location and Geographical Background, Historical Significance of the site, Architectural features of Galle Fort, Architecture of the Old Sewer System, Architectural Significance of the Rampart Structure, Urban setting and the Streetscape, Architectural Significance of the Buildings,

Conservation background of the Heritage fabric are important.

To elucidate the value of Galle Fort, it is necessary to know the meaning of the World Heritage Site and the reason to nominate the site as World Heritage Site. Compare to local community, most of the foreign tourists and foreign business owners have been equipped with compellable knowledge on World Heritage Site.

Tourism and its' influence to Galle Fort Heritage Site

Tourism can support to keep traditions alive, finance the protection of culture and natural heritage and increase visitor appreciation of heritage. Conversely, tourism can damage heritage as lack of appropriate management. Most of the top level boutique hotels and villas in Galle Fort are owned by the foreigners and majority of them try to protect the architectural identity of colonial building structures in their business places while making efforts to obtain benefits via the World Heritage value in line with conservation of the site. Very low prices of food and beverage can be seen at several places where paid lowest attention for authentic heritage values of their buildings. Number of tourist consumed foods and beverages from them are significantly low, because of loss authenticity and integrity.

Conclusions and Recommendation

- Stakeholder participation for each task bears significance value
- It is necessary to have collaborative contribution, expectation and understanding the role of stakeholders to achieve sustainable tourism development
- Need leadership and consultant role of the government to achieve sustainable development
- Need financial support and active human effort with proper attitudes and understanding to maintain heritage value

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