

DARK TOURISM MOTIVES AND ITS IMPACT ON ACHIEVING RECONCILIATION: THE CASE OF JAFFNA

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INTRODUCTION

The Dark Tourism phenomenon evolved around the people being drawn to attractions with a historical past. Nowadays, most probably, tourists are interested in niche tourism markets with special interests and needs. Modern-day tourism is potentially based on this kind of niche concept, called 'Dark Tourism'. The fascination with death and tragedy has influenced the tourism concept today (Reynolds, 2016), and many travellers from all over the world visit areas linked within Sri Lanka; this is a newly identified niche market. There is a lack of studies and academic reports on this concept. This research investigates the travel motives to visit dark destinations in Jaffna and how those motives impact the country's reconciliation.

Regarding the Sri Lankan Context, Dark Tourism is an untapped niche market (Samarathunga et al., 2020). However, there is a possibility of developing the concept of dark tourism with an existing location in the northern region, particularly in Jaffna, which includes several memories of the war in the Jaffna peninsula. The impact of these motives on reconciliation was set up. Different attitudes of domestic tourists motivate them to travel to dark sites. Further, examine those motives and how to impact dark tourism, then finally look to find alternative strategies that can be involved in tourism with the focusing reconciliation and sustainable tourism (Fernando et al., 2013). The significance of this study can be explained in two ways. Theoretically, there is a limited amount of research regarding this, which can be seen as a Research gap under this experiment. This study mainly focuses on filling the research gap, and consequently, it will gain more benefits for academic purposes to uplift the knowledge related to dark tourism. Jaffna is a beautiful destination in Sri Lanka, so after the post-war period, there was huge potential to visit by visitors (Ranasinghe, 2018). So, it will be identified as a new interest to visit those places relating to places and getting educational experiences among travellers. Identifying tourist motivations and behaviour will provide great insight into the industry. Here the tourism sector has so many service providers and stakeholders that can contribute to the many ways of promoting this niche market; according to the Jaffna area, plenty of tourism destinations are available that can promote those places through their different market segments. According to the results of the findings or evaluations, the government can introduce new rules and regulations. They can make some policies regarding particular tourist-based activities based on the findings. They can explore some implementations and experiments as well. Limitations can be identified in a minimal number of previous studies in the Sri Lanka Context. At the same time, the data collection faces plenty of issues because of the Language barrier Author cannot contact them directly to get an answerer. Some questions directly influenced their feelings and thoughts. Due to the Language issue, the author cannot understand their impressions.

METHODOLOGY

The qualitative research method was employed in this study. This study is based on an inductive approach. "Qualitative research is based upon the observations and interpretations of people's perception of different events, and it takes the snapshot of the people's perception in a natural setting" (Khan, 2014). Qualitative Research is based on people's perceptions. This method is helpful to respondents' perceptions regarding the Dark Tourism phenomena. According to the Research, the approach is the appropriate way of identifying different motives and human attitudes in their cultural context. Research philosophy was "constructivism," which involves accepting human behaviours and mindsets. This approach is closely associated with pragmatism constructed from human experiences. The qualitative method was the most appropriate way for this study based on the research area.

This study is to gather multidimensional data from Domestic Sinhala People and Tamil residents in Jaffna. The method consisted of persons-in-semi structured interviews with a diverse sample of Tamil Residence and domestic tourists of respondents. This study aims to identify the motivations of domestic travellers to travel to dark sites in Jaffna and how those motives impact Reconciliation among the Sinhala and Tamil Residence in Jaffna. The author selected sample was a purposive sample, so the selected sample consisted of domestic travellers who visited after the post-war Jaffna, and another sample was Tamil Residents in Jaffna.

This study used semi-structured interviews. Seven interviews are done by Tamil Residence people in Jaffna, and five by domestic travellers. Before the visit, Jaffna researchers before interviews have done pre-test surveys from Domestic tourists. In Interviews, questions were asked to identify the locations they visited in Jaffna and the main reasons they selected this area. Moreover, during the visit, what are their feelings and emotions? Would they revisit memorials? Above mentioned questions were focused on gathering data. From Tamil, residents' questions ask to identify their interaction with Sinhala people. Questions ask to take their ideas about reconciliation. Their attitudes towards mutual connection with Sinhala people. The authors have visited Jaffna and observed behaviours, cultural aspects and perspectives of Tamil People Regarding This Concept. Old kachcheri building, Nallur kovil, Jaffna Museum, Library, Dambakola patuna, Jaffna University, Dencil Kobbekaduwa memorial, Thilipan memorial, Naga Vihara, Kadurugoda bhikshu burials and Kirimale premise are the mainly observed places in Jaffna based on the previous studies and evidence of post-war memories.

The Thematic analysis method was used for data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). After transcribing the interviews through familiarisation with the data coded and generated themes according to the respondents' opinions and attitudes. Finally identified, four themes and eleven sub-codes according to the research findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to the Respondent's data with the help of a master coding hierarchy table providing some themes using qualitative techniques. The author has mainly identified the four main overarching themes. There are Dark Tourism Destinations, tourist Gaze on post-war sites, Reconciliation between Sinhala and Tamil People, and sustainable Tourism in Jaffna. Dark Tourism Destinations theme is explained through three sub-codes: war memorials, war attractions, and war sites. Under the second, they reveal through curiosity to visit war sites and

religious interests. The Reconciliations theme consists of two sub-codes: interaction among civil groups and Tamil Residence's attitudes toward tourist behaviours. Under the theme, sustainable tourism in Jaffna is divided into three subcodes: removing war attractions, preserving cultural attractions, and satisfaction with government actions.

This study's first objective is to identify different motives for visiting Dark Destination. Curiosity is most probably the most key motivation to attend war attractions. The paper reveals how tourists gaze on a visit to the Dark sites since most participants who travelled to those sites most probably mentioned and discussed their curiosity about those dark sites. In a world scenario, millions of tourists are engaging to travel to the Vietnam cu chi tunnel and Auschwitz campsites in Germany (Max, 2012). There are many dark places in the northern region of the Jaffna "Thilipan" memorial, a great icon for people still travelling there. Based on finding that domestic tourist's gaze mainly focused on religious attractions.

The second objective was to identify motives how to impact achieving Reconciliation between both Sinhala and Tamil people. Based on critical findings, both people have two attitudes towards this matter. Sinhala domestic travellers like to visit those Dark places because they want to experience what happened in real life and visit dark places according to their different motives. Finally, according to the findings, several motives influence domestic travellers to visit dark destinations in Jaffna. The author has identified different motives: education, history, novel, curiosity, photography, leisure, emotions and feelings, and myths and stories. Those motives are based on one motivation. It can be seen that curiosity is the primary motivation because most domestic tourists are motivated to visit those Dark Destinations.

Based on their curiosity, there is no impact on the reconciliation between both Sinhala and Tamil people from those motivations. Domestic travellers like to visit those places, but Tamil people do not like going there because some still suffer sad memories and emotional feelings. Both people have two attitudes toward this concept, but there should be strategies to support both parties to identify the value of this Dark concept in the tourism industry.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Dark tourism is the new niche market in the tourism industry. This is not a new phenomenon in the global scenario in countries like Vietnam, Japan, Korea, and Italy. Regarding the Sri Lankan Context, Dark Tourism is an untapped niche market. However, there is a possibility of developing the concept of dark tourism with an existing location in the northern region. Considering their impact on reconciliation, there is no considerable impact on achieving reconciliations, so it can give some strategies for enhancing the suitable tourism in Jaffna. With the help of host participants, mechanisms can be achieved by an excellent mutual bond the link with Dark Tourism in Jaffna.

The main focus of this study is how visiting these dark destinations impacts reconciliation between Sinhala and Tamil people in the country. Both people have two attitudes towards this concept. However, there is no considerable impact on reconciliation. Current locations and memorials like Tholepin's memorial bring emotional attitudes to the Tamil people; even some do not like to visit those. The fact is they had those rude experiences of the war. However, Sinhala people probably did not have experience, and most of them had the curiosity to visit those sites. Most Tamil respondents mentioned that if people visit there to see dark memories that do not matter to them, they do not like to visit those sites. So, the authors conclude here that there are identified different motives: education, history, novel, curiosity, photography,

leisure, emotions and feelings, and myths and stories. It can be seen that curiosity is the primary motivation because most domestic tourists are motivated to visit those Dark Destinations. The Dark tourism concept has no impact on the reconciliation of the country between these two nations. However, there should be strategies to support both parties to identify the value of this Dark concept in the tourism industry and how we can use them as our assets for the sustainable future of the young generation by giving knowledge about our history.

Keywords: Dark tourism, Jaffna, motivation, reconciliation, war memorials

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