

Role of Tea in Tourism Industry in Sri Lanka

Indrachapa Weerasingha¹

Geographical and climatic conditions of Sri Lanka have formed an appropriate possibility for tea cultivation including the areas in Central Province, Southern Province and Western Province. Historical evidences proved that tea tree has a long history dates back to the late 19th Century. Tea trails have been included in most of the tour packages offered by the travel agencies in their tour itineraries. Currently tea plantations, tea culture and tea production have been interacted by the tourism industry in the country. This study is based on the potential in tea concept for promoting tourism industry in all aspects of hospitality, nature tourism, culture tourism, community tourism, and tourism promotions. The research problem was to identify how the tea plant is being attracted by the tourists for their travel and hospitality related satisfaction. Research was conducted by accessing both primary and secondary data collective methods where 20 travel agencies were observed, 7 tea states were observed and 20 tourists were interviewed during the research. Tea products and plantations have been identified as primitive attraction by travel agencies and tour operators for promoting both nature and cultural tourism. Brochures and websites of the travel agencies have been designed with tea culture while the hospitality industry (accommodation units) offers another kind of warm welcome with tea service for their guests such as High Tea. At the tea factories organize specific tea trails where the visitors are given the opportunity to experience from planting tea crops, tea plucking and production procedure. Tea is one of the international symbolic icons in promoting Sri Lanka so that tourism industry is being attributed immense advantage from tea culture. Moreover new technological aspects can be attributed in the tourism industry for promoting tea based tourism experience.

Key words: Tea, Tourism, Sri Lanka, Promotion,

¹ Department of Archaeology, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. chapa.weerasingha@gmail.com