

Attracting Chinese Tourists to Sri Lanka for a sustainable Tourism Industry

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Tourism is one of the main foreign exchange generating industries in Sri Lanka and China is ranked as the second largest market in the industry. The Chinese have the potentiality to travel to many tourist destinations given the stable economic background of their country. The main objective of this research is to identify our potential to target the Chinese market in order to increase the foreign exchange to Sri Lanka. The second objective is to recognize the challenges encountered by the Chinese tourists in Sri Lanka and to identify areas for improvement. The research is based on both primary sources including field observations, interviews and structured questionnaires and secondary sources such as reports, magazines, and websites. The sample consisted of 50 randomly selected Chinese tourists visiting Colombo and its suburbs during weekends. Visitors were interviewed with structured questionnaires to gather information on their understanding and knowledge. They were also asked to comment on how Sri Lanka could be promoted as a tourist destination in order to identify areas for improvement, and also to introduce lesser-known attractions. The study recommends Chinese language learning programmes to be launched among the stakeholders in the industry, arrangements to be planned according to tourists' perceptions and desires (accommodation, food and beverage) and the introduction of new products and activities to attract young Chinese tourists. Further, promotions should be advertised in popular websites and social media.

Keywords: Chinese tourists in Sri Lanka, promoting Sri Lanka in China, potential for Chinese tourists

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