

AB177

POTENTIALS AND PROBLEMS OF ECOTOURISM IN MADUGANGA, SRI LANKA

D.G.T.Dilrukshi¹

According to annual statistical report)2014 (published by SLTDA)Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority(, tourism industry is the fourth largest foreign exchange earner in Sri Lanka. The main objective of this research is to explore the potentials and problems of ecotourism in Maduganga wetland in Sri Lanka . Maduganga wetland is the one of beautiful tourist attractions and a mangrove ecological niche with mangroves rich biodiversity .Located in Balapitiya divisional secretariat division .The population sample consisted of 08 Major owners of tourist boat services and 20 boat riders, 20 local tourists and 20 foreign tourists which represents 10 %of total tourists who visit Maduganga per day were selected for the questioner survey .Primary data were collected through questionnaires, semi structured and informal Interviews and field observations .

The finding reveal that Maduganga has lot of ecotourism potentials .The findings also revealed that the Kothdoowa Tempal, Mangroves islands, Cinnamon chopping centers and Fish therapy centers are the major ecotourism destinations of Maduganga .The findings also revealed that 75 %local tourist get pleasure with boat ride and 25 %participate for watching biological diversity of Maduganga and 80 %foreign tourist like to doing major tourist activities with boat ride and 20 %of tourist like to watching biological diversity of Maduganga .Therefore Government institutions) especially Sri Lankan Tourist Development Authority and Balapitiya Divisional Secretariat (necessary to get attention to improve ecotourism potentials as well as want to establish information center to get information to the tourists easily and ticket counter should be established to reduce ongoing competitiveness between major boat services.

Key words :*Tourism, Ecotourism, potentials and problems, Maduganga.*

¹ Department of Geography, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka, thakshilagamage01@gmail.com