

Conceptual Framework for Promoting Food Tourism in Pettah, Sri Lanka

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Sri Lanka as country is well known for tourism as well as hospitality. There is an increasing trend in tourists' arrivals on the cause of archaeological and historical places, cultural activities, adventure and etc. On the same time tourists were tend to stay short period of time in the country. As tourists are encouraged to stay few nights in the country, promotion of short term tourism experiences for the tourists will be an effective utilization of available natural and man-made resources. Therefore, the study is motivated to develop a conceptual framework in order to promote food tourism in Pettah, Sri Lanka. As the sample frame of the study cannot be clearly identified the convenience sampling method has been used to collect data from the field and questionnaire method was used to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats associated with Pettah in promoting food tourism. Questionnaire method was the main source of information while unstructured interviews also occasionally carried out. Descriptive statistics, SWOT analysis, and chi-square test were used to analyze data with the assistance of SPSS version 21.0 and Microsoft Excel 2010. The results of the study identified that most of the tourists are aware of Pettah as a place where all the goods are available. But none of the tourists was tend to visit Pettah due to popularity of its foods. Also the study could have identified that the majority of tourists buy some street foods from the street vendors while they are experiencing shopping at Pettah. Thereby the study could have identified that there is a huge opportunity to improve Pettah as a destination for Food Tourism. Pettah could be identified as a destination where a combination of strength and opportunities as well as weaknesses and threats too. The study found that Pettah is with a preferable environment for tourists and local travelers where majority of tourists and travelers comes for shopping purposes at lower cost. There is a collection of food manufacturing companies in the country whom that can be encouraged to be an active part of promoting food tourism in Pettah. Also there can be identified wide variety of foods and diverse product mixes relevant to specific regions, religions, festivals, races, and etc. On the same time the lower level attitude towards the quality of products in Pettah and the lack of cleanliness around the area are the major drawbacks to promote food tourism in Pettah. However, the study could conclude that there is a significant relationship between demographic factors of the tourists and preference to the food tourism in Pettah. Thereby the promotion of food tourism in Pettah should be align with the different requirements of the tourists along with their demographic characteristics as well.

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