

**Resident's Perceptions towards Sustainable Tourism Development and Its Impact:
Evidence form Aluthgama in Sri Lanka**

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Sustainable development method is of highest importance for the future survival of tourism destinations. Empowering sustainable tourism based on social, economy and environmental development as considered a necessity. All stakeholders of the tourism sector have important roles in this development process. Specifically, the attachment of local community to this process and their contribution in decision-making instruments signify a central point in sustainable tourism development. Several tourism development projects that do not take the needs and perceptions of residents into attention do not have much chance for success.

Major research objective is to analyze local community perceptions towards sustainable tourism development and its impact. A survey was conducted using a structured questionnaire with 100 respondents from the local community in Aluthgama area. For testing reliability and validity, the cornbranch alpha and factor analysis were used. Likert scale analysis was done for the analysis of the data and using factor and correlation analysis, t-tests and ANOVA.

The result of analysis discovered that tourism influences the quality of Resident members' life. Also, there is a significant relationship between factors affecting quality of community members' life and their level of contribution. Thus, the study findings offer suggestions for the successful management of tourism businesses as well as the community sustainability and their well-being. Findings from data analysis suggested that tourism development in Aluthgama has provided more benefits than costs to the residents.

Also, the study confirmed the usefulness of the social exchange theory in explaining the resident's perceptions of tourism impacts and their support for tourism development. Based on these findings, the understanding of the resident's opinion on perceived impacts is important before implementing any tourism related development by the outsiders. The developed framework will be useful to understand the host tourism system and relationship that will emphasize co-management approach to promote a sustainable tourism practice.

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