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Challenges in Promoting Tourism Industry of Sri Lanka

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Sri Lanka has a long history of tourism, dating back to the times of ancient kingdoms. According to different sources of historical accounts, many foreigners have visited the country for various reasons. Ancient chronicles provide ample evidence of visitors such as Fa Hien, Marco Polo and Ibn Battuta, not as tourists in the modern sense, but for different reasons visiting the country. Europeans started visiting Sri Lanka from the beginning of 16th century mainly for trade, firstly the Portuguese and then the Dutch and British, culminating as invaders. The arrival of tourists may have increased during the Dutch and British periods along with the expansions of international transactions of the country, especially rapid expansion of the plantation sector during the British period.

Even though the Ceylon Tourism Bureau was established in 1937 to promote the sector; its functions were affected adversely by the Second World War. The tourism did not receive an adequate attention in the early stages of the post- independence era as abundant prosperity was generated by the plantation sector. Along with the changing economic contours, new avenues were being explored in the subsequent years. The Ceylon Tourist Board was established in 1966 after identifying the potential of tourism, and later it was replaced by Sri Lanka Tourism Authority in 2007. The arrival of tourists increased slowly but surely since late 1960s and the arrivals reached to 103,204 in 1975 and 2,116,407 in 2017. The tourist arrivals increased by three fold between 1975 and 1980 and again it increased by 21 fold between 1975 and 2017. There were ups and downs of the industry due to domestic as well as international factors in the past. Among all, the civil war (1983-2009) retarded the progress of the industry to a great extent. Tourist arrival increased rapidly since the end of the war although the annual growth rate has not been steady after the early increase.

“Sri Lanka is an island country and god has given to Sri Lanka blessings of nature blue seas, green hills, sandy beaches, abundant wildlife, cascading waterfalls, a riot of flowers and fruits, coconut groves, tea estates, spice gardens.” (UK Essays 2017). The monarchs in olden days built a lot of monuments, pagodas, ponds, gardens, fortresses, tanks, sophisticated canal systems and stretches of rice fields. Colonial rulers introduced coffee, tea, rubber and large scale coconut cultivations. Similarly, they built colonial administrative buildings and bungalows, roads, railway system, towns and city centers, forts, harbors, airports and canals. The modern administration, law and order, communication system, health, and education were not second to any country in the world. Sri Lanka would have displayed this heritage to the rest of the world and generated

sufficient income and provided employment after the political independence, if correct policies were chosen.

The modern tourists' opinions about the country as a destination mostly balanced even in the midst of the negative opinions expressed by some. "Sri Lanka is known for its gorgeous UNESCO World Heritage Sites and its accessible location, and is a great place to visit in South Asia for anyone looking for a relaxing vacation spot. This country also has a reputation for being one of the friendliest hosts in South Asia... Despite being generally safe, Sri Lanka has a high petty crime rate, although this rarely extends to foreigners and violent crime against tourists is rare. However, there are still quite a number of tourist targeted scams you need to be aware of." (Travel Scams.Org 2017).

There are a number of factors hindering the sustainable growth of the industry, in spite of the optimistic attitude of some stakeholders of the sustained growth. It would be essential to address some of those challenges, if a bright future for the industry to be safeguarded. This short essay highlights a certain destructive forces affecting the industry adversely in good faith to promote the industry in sustainable manner. The field observations as well as the secondary sources are used as the sources of information.

The first impression of the destination is extremely important for a new comer and he would perceive the rest of his tour based on the very first experience. When a tourist arrives at the Colombo International Airport, he would go through some uncomfortable experience due to poor infrastructure and related facilities. Above all, the airport design, extent, services are not adequate and does not match the global requirements. The washroom facility, perhaps the first priority after a long travel, does not meet standards. It is unfortunate that visitors have to wait in line most of the time. Duty free area is extremely backward compared to well-maintained modern airports in the region and beyond. When foreigners converted their money to Sri Lankan currency notes, they reflect the backward nature of the society and economy. The chaotic atmosphere at the exit with struggling passengers, welcoming relations /friends, vehicles, helpers and brokers make the new visitor uncomfortable. Whilst there are is no proper car park, the parking areas of the airport, outside the building, is in a primitive state.

A survey carried out by the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA) in 2016 suggests that the overall rating of services at the airport was either Good (66%) or Satisfactory (17%). No figure is given for excellence in these ratings; good and satisfactory are mostly diplomatic terms. A considerable number of tourists are Chinese and Indians, so that the reader will have some reservation regarding the good and satisfactory ratings of the survey on airport condition.

The Colombo Airport was in the 5th place in 2018 at regional airports Awards of C Asia/ India. Mumbai, Bangalore, Delhi and Hyderabad were ranked 1 to 4 places in that order. Except Colombo Airport; all four others are within the top 100 world airports. Changi airport in Singapore is the best airport in the world in this ranking. Sri Lankan Airlines was ranked in the 67 place in the best 100 world airlines in in 2016 and 81st place in 2017 (Skytrax 2018).

The roads that leads out of the airport lack the appearance of a modern city, somewhat narrow, with surroundings not attractive. The environment outside further aggravate the situation by unruly vehicular traffic and jaywalking pedestrians. The either side of the stretch of road nearly one km from Airport towards Minuwangoda is a desolate land, it is even difficult to comprehend that you are close an international airport!

There is no service area close to the airport; the small Katunayake Township is very underdeveloped and there are no good restaurants and other urban facilities in it. There is neither a railway station nor a bus terminal at the Airport to provide service to tourists. The small railway station located close to the Katunayake Township is also in a primitive condition and it is not in a position to provide services to the airport at all. Ordinary tourists, the overwhelming majority of them have to go to Negombo to satisfy their urgent requirements as they cannot afford inflated star hotel rates.

The transit passengers are sleeping inside the airport and the passenger who arrive early for departures are also idling either outside or inside the airport. Service rates inside the airport are unacceptably high and do not reflect the quality of the products, level of economic development or the comparative advantages of the country. Overwhelming majority of passengers, both locals and foreigners, are not rich enough to pay for the irrationally inflated prices in the airport. It is not fair to perceive that all the visitors are rich enough to pay five star rates for inferior services. The basic principles of price elasticities and revenue/profits as well as customer satisfaction and overall social welfare implications have not been considered in fixing service rates/ levying taxes in the airport.

The express way from airport to Peliyagoda is maintained in good condition though greenish environment on the either sides of the road is disappearing fast now. The tourist is in the sea of unruly flow of vehicles from the end of the express way to the city center. The visitor, other than from countries similar or worse to Sri Lanka, does not feel safe when they travel on Sri Lankan roads mainly due to undisciplined driving. Stray cattle and dogs, jaywalking, poorly maintained roads and road shoulders/pavements, vehicle parking on roadsides, and lack of essential road signs aggravate the situation further.

A survey carried out by the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA) in 2016 suggested that the majority of tourists, (70 percent of arrivals,) were on their first visit to Sri Lanka, 27 percent had visited only once before and 17 percent had visited at least twice before. Nationalities of the tourists are not given in those figures as there are some Indian peddlers who make a number of visits to Sri Lanka to make money. In addition to that there are some who visit their relations/ friends regularly. Similarly, there are genuine tourists who visit any country more than once.

Kandy the most popular destinations among tourists

The SLTDA survey- 2016 reveals that the most popular location in Sri Lanka for inbound tourists is Kandy (63%). The Kandy city and surrounding areas have been the most attractive location among the tourist since long even though it is not a sufficiently developed location with modern facilities. In the global age, safe, comfortable, fast yet cheap transport is essential for the tourist in developed city centers. The connectivity between the Kandy city and rest of the island depend on road, railway, and air transport.

The road transport is still the frequently available and the easiest mode of transport to Kandy. There are a number of major routes connecting the Kandy city with the other parts of the country. In addition to A1 Colombo- road, the other main roads connected with Kandy are: A9 Jaffna road via Anuradhapura and Dambulla; A10 Puttalam road via Wariyapola and Kurunegala; A 26 Padiyatalawa road via Mahiyanganaya and Nuwara Eliya road via Gampola. Travelling time by roads to Kandy has increased in the past due to growing traffic congestion mainly due to the growing number of vehicles on roads and slow development of road expansion activities. Travelling within the Kandy city limit itself take unacceptably long time and vehicles remain standstill quite some time during peak hours polluting the environment. This is serious in Kandy as it is located in a plateau.

Commenting on clogged traffic of Kandy "...release exhaust gas, i.e. diesel fume. One gets a burning sensation in the throat and chest when inhaling this fume from open windows. I had to use a handkerchief all the way during my travels in buses to avoid this poisonous gas. My experience is that if I don't, I develop a persistent cough, i.e. Kandy Kassa that can last for weeks if not months. Cough syrup does not cure this ailment." (Gamage, Siri 2017).

The railway transport in the country has utterly failed to meet the growing passenger and cargo demand. Sri Lanka railway is still in its primitive status compared to many other countries even in the region. The Sri Lanka railway has failed to contribute its fair share to the growing demand for transport of the country, so that Kandy is not receiving sufficient benefits from railway even

though there are railroads linking Kandy with Colombo, Badulla, and Matlae. The Knady and nearby Perdeniya railway stations have not been developed to meet the passengers' requirements and remained in rundown situation. The railway has failed to contribute adequately to promote the tourism in Sri Lanka.

“The entrance [Peradeniya Railway Station] is covered with mud when raining and dust when not raining. It is not sealed. On one side, there are piles of stones stored (on railway line side). On the other side, bowsers fill petrol. In the past, petrol was transported to the nearby filling station using the railway. ... Foreign tourists and locals look for aesthetic enjoyment in public places such as railway stations instead of mud, dust and large petrol bowsers. It is incomprehensible why authorities that of course travel in air-conditioned comfort with escorts neglect such an important place!” (Gamage, Siri 2017).

Travel by air to Kandy is also limited as the tourists have to fly by sea planes or choppers. There are no airport or regular air service to Kandy.

Cultural shows staged in a few locations in Kandy are popular among tourists. Such shows not only promote the Sri Lankan culture but also boost the image of the country. However, seating arrangements and other facilities such as washrooms are below the accepted standards. At the end of the shows, some artists have the habit of collecting money at the exit thereby tarnishing their own images as well as the image of the country.

Street vendors, especially those who sell antiques, are forcing on tourists to purchase their items. This is very common in almost all the tourist destinations in the island. The visitor should be given freedom to choose rather than forcing them to purchase them.

Colombo City/Shopping: The Second best Choice among Tourists

The second most favorable attraction among the inbound tourist, according to the SLTDA survey is Colombo City/Shopping (61%). Colombo is not a big and highly developed city with modern facilities to attract tourist. If it was well developed city, Sri Lanka would have attracted a large number of high and middle income tourists from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh and also other nations. It is widely accepted view that South Asians have special attraction to Sri Lanka and Colombo, nevertheless they do not come to Colombo for shopping, businesses, leisure and other purposes as Colombo is not attractive and competitive city such as European cities , Dubai, Singapore, Bangkok and Kula Lumpur. Colombo is considered a 'dead city' after 9 pm.

Indian economy as well as out bound tourism is booming. UNWTO predicts India will account 50 million out bound tourists and their spending is also going up. It is estimated that that 40 percent of outbound trips by Indians are for business, leisure, visiting friends and relatives and Europe receives estimated market share of 20 percent of Indian outbound departures (Das, Sohini 2018).

There was a noticeable commitment with tangible results in developing Colombo as one of the best cities in South Asia immediately after the civil war. This effort has virtually come to stand still in the recent past even though a lot of fairy tales flow around. The city water streams are polluted with the solid wastes and the tidiness of the city is no longer there now. Notwithstanding all the defects, the Colombo city is comparatively better than provincial or suburban towns. A well-developed major city is essential, when tourism is promoted as it is the magnet of leisure, shopping, business, and education. Tourists do not feel comfortable and safe in the night as Colombo is in dark in the night.

Colombo city sleeps in the night while other cities in Asian regions are illuminated with night lights. There are no normal economic activities like travelling, shopping and eating in Colombo in the night (Abeyratne, Sirimal 2018).

Among the top ten fast growing cities, the Colombo occupied the top most position in 2015 (for the 2009-2015 period) and it came down to the 3rd place in 2016 (2009-2016 time period) Colombo was standing at 3rd place and it was not among the top 10 in 2017 (MasterCard Global Destinations 2018).

Trip Adviser, a US company, provides tourism related information including interactive forums in its website free of charge. A few comments made by visitors to Colombo city are included below. There are a many encouraging remarks, it seems that overwhelming majority are like that, the undesirable remarks are purposely selected here as appreciation will never give more satisfaction to the inbound tourists in the future.

“I went to Sri Lanka with my girlfriend for 4 days and spent most of the time in Colombo and surrounding towns. I have to say that the country is incredibly poor but still charge massively inflated prices to the tourists. I have been to hundreds of Cities across the globe and am very street wise when it comes to tourist traps and getting ripped off, but Sri Lanka takes it to a new level.... Really bad meal consisting of chicken and rice - \$17 US Dollars (must have been paying for all the extra mosquitoes and stains on the table cloth)...” (gboyle8 from UK 2011). It is well known fact that Sri Lankan rates in many services and products are higher compared to similar rates in Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia. Corresponding prices of many services and goods in South Asia are very much less to Sri Lanka.

Low quality of products and services, deceitfulness, discourteous behavioral pattern, remnants of medieval characteristics, purposely violating rules and regulations, polluted cities and inefficient law enforcement agencies are some of the key backward characteristics in many developing countries including Sri Lanka. "...The things that struck us most about the country is that the people are friendly but those involved in the local tourism are very greedy and unscrupulous. Tuk tuks try to rip-off tourists through threats even when fees were agreed beforehand, restaurants served overpriced food with under trained staff and hotels charged high rates for rooms that were not maintained. Worst is the self-appointed local guides who take tourists to overpriced shops, restaurants and hotels for their own benefits. One will be shocked by the differences in price be it merchandise, rooms or food if one were to enquire about them oneself, For a country that is trying to revive the local tourism industry , the government better do some cleaning up before these vultures tear it to pieces. ..." (StOne 555 from Malaysia 2010)

There are no sufficient parks, gardens, walking paths even though a few of them were developed a few years back. The green and shady trees are uprooted without replanting any tree in the city. The green environment is also part of the identity of Colombo city. The beautiful shady trees at Narahenpita junction were removed in one night in spite of many other problems are engulfing the city and its folks.

Some Asian cities are preferred as tourist destinations surpassing popularity of traditional cities in advanced countries. "For the ninth year in a row, Hong Kong has held on to its crown as the planet's most visited city. Revealing the results of its 2017 Top 100 City Destinations survey, market researcher Euromonitor International says the Asian territory pulled in 26 million visitors in the previous year - a number predicted to swell to 44 million by 2025. In second place, with an impressive 21.25 million visitors in 2016 and annual growth of close to 10%, is Bangkok. Its big-city rival London has been pushed firmly into third place, with 19.2 million visitors in 2016 and 19.8 million expected in 2017." (CNN 2017)

The South/West Coast Beaches

The Beaches in the South/West Coast are the third most popular tourist attraction in Sri Lanka according to the SLTDA survey. Beach tourism in Sri Lanka has a long history going back to the Colonial period of the island. Hikkaduwa and the adjacent areas were becoming popular among British in Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) in the nineteenth century. The coral reefs and corral gardens were popular picnic destinations among British administrative officials. They built a rest house therein and area had become a popular tourist destination. The development of tourism in the area can be divided into two phases as 1966-1976 slow growth period and post 1976 as the fast growth period with new hotels and other infrastructural facilities (Dickson, N.D. et al 1984).

The most of the beautiful beaches and surrounding areas, especially in the Southern and western parts of the island, are polluted with solid waste. Star hotels maintain their surrounding areas well, but other areas are full of garbage like plastic bags, bottles, paper, king coconut shells and other wastes thrown into the sea or brought by rivers, canals and other waterways.

Some of the of the mangroves on Sri Lankan beaches have disappeared in the past due to natural factors such as tidal waves, sea erosion and tsunami. The greatest threat is coming from the man due to construction of structures, walls, roads, make shift restaurants and huts and other activities. Adverse effects have caused in reducing a large section of the mangroves on beaches as well as scenic beauty of beaches. Most of the large hotels have erected high walls covering the sea in many parts of the Southern and Western coastal areas of the country.

Harassment of visitors, especially females, mainly in outstations, is a huge black mark for tourism to flourish. Many harassment and abuse cases have gone unnoticed as the Sri Lankan legal system is too slow and law enforcement agencies are inherently inefficient. Two violence incidences were recorded within a space of one week in Southern Sri Lanka in April 2018 even though one is not against females. Many travel sites warn foreigners who plan to come here about issues such as bus travel and dress codes outside Colombo. Spontaneous attacks on tourists is not new even in developed cities such as London and New York. It is somewhat difference in Sri Lanka as some cases, victims are denied their rights due to political interferences. All the attempts were made to sweep the Tangalle case under the carpet due to political interference in the past. This unfortunate incident checked the rapid growth of tourism to a great extent.

Some common issues

Sri Lanka is considered as one of the expensive tourist destinations in the developing world and it is well above the level of economic development and factor endowment of the country. The accommodation in star hotels is rather expensive and services provided by them are also exorbitantly high. Many who visit the country therefore leave with second thought about a revisit in spite of many tourist attractions.

In order to guarantee the overall development of the country, ancient kings of Sri Lanka built reservoirs and sophisticated irrigation systems. Pagodas, shrines and similar monuments constructed for enhancing spiritual development. The exceptional case is Sigiriya, a UNESCO approved heritage site which is a popular tourist attraction which enables the country to make an earning though it is maintained below the standard levels. Many of these historical attractions charge an entrance fee form foreign visitors. The rates per person for Anuradhapura,

Polonnaruwa, Sigiriya, and Dambulla are US\$ 25, 25, 30 and 15 respectively, so that the total cost is US\$ 95. The irony is that the local visitor pays much less than a tourist. A comment by a tourist highlights this discrimination. "Entry to local museum - \$15 USD – I can normally live with this but when they have a sign up telling you how much the locals are paying then it annoys me.... Entry to Lions rock - \$25 USD Each – It is just a rock and in most countries you could get up there for free. The toilets don't work..." (gboyle8 from UK, TripAdvisor2011). Now new toilets for foreigners have been built though the service areas for local visitors are not developed. Some tourists at times go to local service areas as well.

Economic theory differentiates between two types of costs, the fixed cost and variable cost. Expenses incurred on roads, bridges, reservoirs, dams, buildings, machinery and equipment are considered as fixed cost. The expenses on labor, electricity, water, and other raw materials etc. fall into the category of variable cost. Sri Lankan government and the trustees of the historical locations virtually have not incurred any fixed cost except the maintenance cost which falls into variable category. There are no rebuilding or extension of projects which would increase the fixed costs. Proper management will generate sufficient income for them while maintaining the image of the site.

Tourists discuss their experience in Sri Lanka including the cost of the destinations in websites, blogs and social media. Such information is extremely useful in promoting Sri Lankan tourism at grassroots level. The following comments borrowed from the *Time Travel Turtle* website and its blog provide some insights into tourists' perception on Sri Lanka as a destination. The comments on entry fees for historical sites were purposely selected as it has been a controversial matter among many visitors.

"Sri Lanka has surprised me a bit with the cost of things like food, accommodation, and drinks... but I guess it's still reasonable enough. But when it comes to entrance tickets to popular tourist places – phwoar, that's a whole other story!" (Turtle, Michael). Discriminatory entry fee is one of the big issues among tourists visiting Sri Lanka. "I'm in Sri Lanka at the moment, and have spent the past 10 days travelling around various places both on my own and with a Sri Lankan friend of mine. ...The main disconnect for me has been the difference in prices that the two of us have had to pay. The most notable being today where my entry fee to a small museum where it cost me thirty times the price that she had to pay." (Geoff, TripAdvisor, December 18, 2014 at 5:05 pm).

Promotion of historical sites among tourists is discouraged by exorbitant entry fees. "...this [high entry fees] does not encourage people to visit and understand the country's cultural heritage. Moreover I often noticed how, many Asians have 'milking a cow' attitude towards foreign tourist, which is annoying." (Simon, *Travel Turtle*, December 19, 2014 at 9:52 am). "Oh, wow, \$95 to see

it all is certainly expensive, especially when making a few comparisons. At least you still got some really great photos and the taxi driver was helping you!!”(Mary @ Green Global Travel, December 21, 2014 at 3:07 pm)

In most of those locations, tourists are not provided with essential facilities such as a washroom, clean restaurant, resting and parking facilities and not even proper sign boards. Even though the ancient monarchs built and maintained such locations properly with a great effort during those hard times, heirs of the modern day do not know how to maintain them well to meet the highest satisfaction of the visitor.

“It is very interesting to find good miniature replica of the Lion Rock and pictures of them as they have originally been. There are a lot people offering to act as guides and also people forcing different products, within the area itself which I found a bit irritating.” Janika V, from Finland (Trip Advisor, 2015).

“3500 rupees to get near to this [Sigiriya]. We weren't going to pay that as we weren't able to climb. Our driver took us to a spot where we could get photos. Very commercial. Silk shop very expensive and not silk!” (Moyna S Killucan, from Ireland, Trip Advisor, 2015).

Other distressing factors such as beggars, stray dogs and cattle are found in anywhere in the country, disturbing not only tourists but also local people. It has been reported that there are about 600 genuine beggars with some 3,000 bogus beggars who do it as an occupation in Colombo and there were about 16,000 in and around Colombo in 2017 (The Daily Mirror 2017). There were around 500 stray cattle in the Colombo District alone, with most of them in suburbs such as Piliyandala, Kesbewa and Kaduwela areas (The Sunday Times 2017). Stray dogs can pose a danger to public health. This is also not good from the point of view of the animals themselves as it is difficult to find food in the city. They then tend to feed garbage bins in addition to living near eateries where thrown-away food is available. (The Sunday Observer 2018). Stray dogs and cattle create a traffic hazard on already congested roads and lanes.

There are endless protests, agitations and strikes even for infinitesimal reasons, ethnic and religious turmoil disrupt the day to day life which adversely affect the tourism industry as well. “Common political factors which affect the tourism industry are revolution, civil war, factional conflict, ethnic violence, religious turmoil, widespread riots, terrorism, nationwide strikes, protests, cross- national guerrilla warfare, world public opinion, repatriation restrictions, bureaucratic politics, leadership struggle, high inflation, border conflicts, high external debt service ratio and creeping nationalization. Last thirty years Sri Lanka also faced the civil war and it affected the tourism industry of Sri Lanka. Organizing elections frequently also create threat to

the tourism industry because during the election period in some places to control the situation, curfew is declared.” (UK Essays 2017).

Travel Scams.Org identify 21 common scams in Sri Lanka as cigarette Scams (the tourist is expected to pay inflated price for a packet of cigarettes and drinks in engage for information given on Sri Lanka by a bogus official); tea shipping (scammer gets money from tourist promising to send tea at cheap rates to his home address); fake gem stones (offering heavily discounted price for fake gems); unofficial tour guides (they promise low priced goods and services while receiving commissions from suppliers);spice garden scam (guiding tourists to buy medicinal products at inflated prices); visa scams (extortion and inconsistent visa fees at the airport); safari scam (tuk tuk drives and taxi drivers arrange safari tours at inflated price though the actual price is low); fake disabilities beggars (Scammers approach to tourists with a donation sheet asking donation for treatments to disabled person); teacher beggar (decent mannered scammer posing as a teacher request donations for poor school); the place is closed (driver or tour guide would say restaurant or shop you want to go to is closed even though it is not and suggest alternative places for a hidden commission); “government” tuk tuk scam (scammer arranges a bogus government tuk tuk for fake special function and the tourist is robbed in a secluded place); rogue tut-tuks (first offer is changed halfway through and changes are not returned after payment is made); non metered taxis (taxi driver would say meter is not functioning after the tourist gets in and charge inflated prices); Non direct routes (tourist is taken trough a longer route to charge more); fake travel tickets (scammer poses as an official and sells you a fake ticket or a ticket at an inflated price); corrupt traffic police (corrupt traffic police officials imposed spot fines for non-committed traffic rule violations from tourists riding hired motor bicycles); ATM fraud (scammers collet card details and money is withdrawn); credit card scam (double charged or overcharged when payments are settled); someone you should but don't recognize (scammer postures as overly friendly local working in your hotel and borrow some money for and urgent matter); pickpocketing (it happens in crowded places) and snatch theft (thieves in motorcycles snatch bags, wallets, cameras, phones etc.) (Travel Scams.Org 2017).

Unlike in the past, tourists are mingling with the local people now in public buses, railways, restaurants, bus terminals, markets, shopping malls, post offices, parks, streets, cinemas, beaches, walking paths, small boutiques in the country side. There are occasions on which tourists insist on to have refreshments, breakfast, lunch and dinner in the roadside eating houses while they travel. Some services in general have improved in the past, but backward characteristics still remain in many parts of the island. When it comes to washroom facilities, overall condition has not been improved yet, solid waste disposal is not properly carried out, dust and muddy water are very common in many locations. Locals do not have the habit of queuing

up, for their turn which is an irritating practice for all including tourists. Jaywalking of pedestrians is widely found in the country and even tourists learn the habit from locals.

Tourists, especially those who are coming from temperate climate, are longing to eat tropical fruits. Sri Lanka is famous for its tropical fruits such as pineapple, mango, banana, guava, papaya etc. Tourists halfway through their trips stop roadside to taste such tropical fruits and they ending up with artificially ripened unpalatable and unpleasant fruits. Similarly, those who drink Sri Lankan tea from roadside eating houses will judge the flavor of famous Ceylon tea differently.

The old beautiful country side is no longer exist in Sri Lanka as beautiful coconut groves, shady rubber bushes, and roadside flamboyant trees have been uprooted. The greatest damage is done by the unplanned partitioning of picturesque estates by auctioneers. The shape of the rivers and water streams have also changed due to illegal sand mining. Irrigation tanks, canals, water pools, water streams, reservation and unoccupied lands are dumped with plastic bags, bottles and other trash. Old flower bushes, birds, sprats in water pools and other wild creatures are no longer there in the countryside now. Similarly, traditional country side fences with trees, bushes and creepers are replaced with obnoxious and dull walls.

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