

Prospective Visitors' Perception towards Spice Tourism: With Reference to Spice Gardens in Kolonna Divisional Secretariat Division of Ratnapura District in Sri Lanka

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Abstract : This research was conducted to study prospective visitors' expectation and future behavior regarding agro tourism destinations in spice gardens (spice tourism) in Kolonna. A field survey was conducted for the 40 randomly selected local and foreign visitors who have come to visit three famous tourism destinations in Kolonna namely "Maduwanwela Walawwa", "Wawulpane Limestone cave" and "Panamure Eth gala" during three month of time period from February to April 2014. Descriptive and Chi square statistical tests were used to analyze the data. The results revealed that 98% of visitors were willing to visit the spice tourism destinations. Furthermore, visitors with urban residency, higher education level and employment opportunities revealed an association with having awareness on agro tourism. Moreover, visitors having higher age, higher level of education and higher amount of monthly income revealed an association with the willingness to visit spice tourism destinations. Nevertheless, out of eight demographic factors, three factors; gender, occupation and income had significant effect on willingness to purchase spice products from Kolonna. According to research findings it can be concluded that there are large number of perspective visitors for spice tourism and they are middle aged, educated and having significant monthly income and they are also very much interest to visit spice tourism destinations and buy spice products (high demand). Therefore, it is significantly beneficial to establish spice tourism destinations in spice gardens by successful spice cultivating farmers or owners as an extra income earning activity in Kolonna area.

Keywords : agro tourism, spice gardens, perception, prospective visitors, Sri Lanka

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