

Sri Lanka Tourism for Inclusive Growth: *The Way Forward*



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The COVID-19 pandemic has made an unprecedented and devastated disaster to tourism industry. It has created a massive social and economic detrimental impact. Developing economies like Sri Lanka have been severely hit and created uncompromising consequences on the socio-economic development of the country. The tourism industry, being the third highest foreign exchange earner and being one of the highest employment generators of the economy has been the hardest hit in Sri Lankan economy. At this pandemic disaster, as usual, the marginalized groups and the most vulnerable segments of Sri Lanka Tourism have been hit hardest among all.

"The Nut that Should Not Forget its Skin"

The restarting of Sri Lanka Tourism must put a very special attention on these marginalized groups and the most vulnerable segments through its recovery growth. It is fundamentally important to achieve the sustainable recovery of the industry.

The **Benefits of the Recovery-Growth** should be enjoyed widely and fairly by all segments of helping for the recovery of Sri Lanka Tourism. It should be more focused not only highly valuable contributors but also on marginalized and so vulnerable groups of Sri Lanka Tourism if it is to provide a right way for Inclusive and sustainable tourism development.

Economic Growth and Tourism Growth: **Total Vs Everyone**

Economic Growth means only the overall growth in the economy and generally measured using the concept of Gross Domestic Product or GDP. It does not focus on how the growth is benefiting to the different sections of the society.

Tourism for Inclusive Growth: **The Crux of the Matter**

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- Tourism Growth can create a similar result if it does not go with inclusive growth. Tourism growth does not provide fair benefits to all segments involved despite the prosperity and growth of the industry.
- Dominance nature of large-scale players, perhaps multi-national companies of the industry exploit unfair benefits from the tourism growth by using the market power of monopoly and monopsony business operation.
- **Tourism for Inclusive Growth** is meant to ensure the benefits of tourism growth to all segments of the industry. More specifically, it is to create fair benefits to the poor, marginalized and vulnerable segments directly or indirectly involved to the tourism industry through providing more productive opportunities along with equal access for everyone.

People-Centred Tourism Development: **Hitting the Nail on the Head**

- People-Centred Tourism Development requires tourism growth to be more inclusive.



Approximately 450,000 persons directly and indirectly affected by COVID 19 and as a result approximately One million family members are so vulnerable

Highly vulnerable employees of the industry due the impact of COVID-19:

- **National Tour Guides and Other Trained Guides (6500); Area/Site Guides (1000); Chauffeur guide**

- Sustainability of People-Centred Tourism Development can be challenged and could become more difficult to be achieved when our tourism growth creates marginalization and polarization of some segments of growth contributors and also create negative externalities. It will lead to widen the disparity of income levels and opportunities available between large and small scales tourism contributors, more specifically among the community members involved with tourism industry.
- People Centred Tourism Development means 'Ground Up Development' for community well-being by empowering the communities to create manifold opportunities and pathways for them to enhance their life standards and wellbeing.

INCLUSIVE TOURISM VS TOURISM FOR INCLUSIVE GROWTH: NOT ONE SIDE OF THE COIN

INCLUSIVE TOURISM:

It is to ensure tourist destinations, products, services and events that are accessible to all people, regardless of their physical limitations, disabilities or age. It opens up and embraces the entire community of travellers, regardless of ability, tourism operators have the opportunity to appeal to a wider range of tourists.

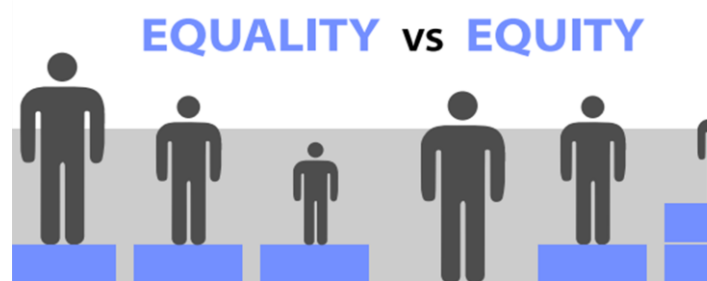
TOURISM FOR INCLUSIVE GROWTH:

The benefits or fruits of tourism growth should be reached by every individual/section of the society with a fair share. Every segment of the poor communities of the society should be included in to the process of obtaining the benefits of tourism growth and Development.

Equality Vs Equity

Equality: Everyone gets equal amount

Equity: Everyone gets certain amount or opportunities according to his/her needs



WORLD TOURISM DAY 2021 | **TOURISM FOR INCLUSIVE GROWTH**

Empowering the Powerless:

- **Tourism for Inclusive growth** is to empower the powerless people with their creative thinking and their contribution to the industry without discouraging influence from the 'top-down decisions' but **multi-level participatory development approach** is vital.

UNWTO: Tourism for Inclusive Growth

- By considering the **Fairness of Tourism Growth Recovery**, this year, the UNWTO has designated the World Tourism Day Celebration-2021 as a day to focus on **Tourism for Inclusive Growth**.

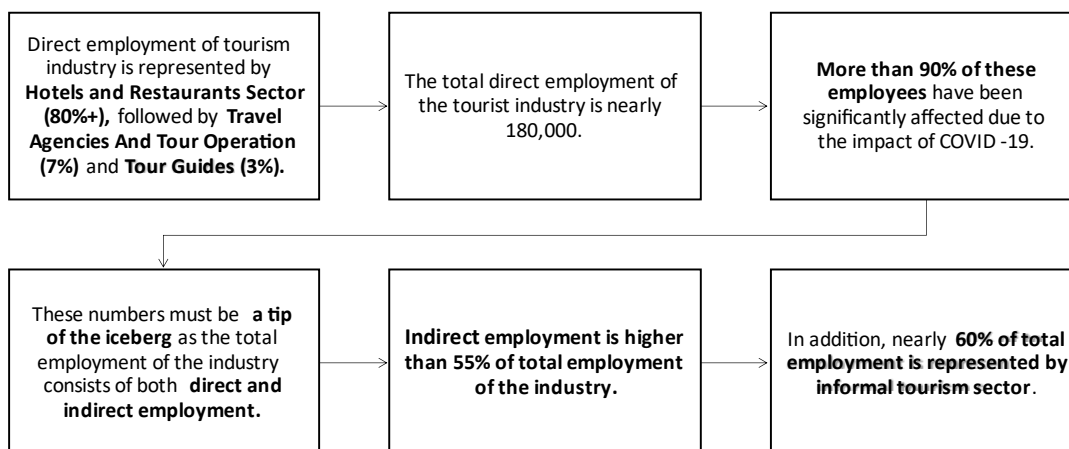
Look Beyond the Numbers When Uncountable

- Therefore, Sri Lanka Tourism should see the way forward with the strategies and policy measures to convert tourism industry as a reliable economic vehicle to ensure Inclusive Growth of the country. On this purpose, our industry must grab the emerging opportunities coming out post-COVID global tourism development. It should ***“look beyond tourism statistics and acknowledge that, behind every number, there is a person”*** (UNWTO, 2021).

Nobody should be Left the Behind:

- Recovery of Sri Lanka Tourism should celebrate **UNWTO World Tourism Day – 2021** with all key stakeholders proving the industry’s unique ability to ensure that **NOBODY IS LEFT BEHIND** the Recovery-Growth of Sri Lanka Tourism by ensuring **tourism for inclusive growth**. It has been clearly evidenced from the COVID Pandemic that **“the power and potential of tourism to advance prosperity and drive inclusive, sustainable development”** (UNWTO. 2021). The tourism industry has made a significant contribution to almost every part of our economy through its direct, indirect and induced benefits. It has shown its high power of creating positive stimulation to all the sectors of the economy through its backward and forward linkages.

Impact of COVID-19 : Direct Impact *It isa Tip of the Iceberg*



- The most important task now Sri Lanka Tourism should ensure that strengthening the power of tourism industry for enabling the marginalized segments of the people and the vulnerable

communities those who are at risk of being left behind the benefit from the post-COVID Recovery and Development of Sri Lanka Tourism for a better life and respectable living standards for them.

- More specifically, at this juncture where global tourism is to begin with **Human-Oriented Tourism** that creates more **responsible, decerning, health caring and human well-being focused tourists** in global tourism demand.



Tourism for Inclusive Growth

SDGs and Tourism for Inclusive Growth

- The Concept of Sustainable Development, which was described by the 1987 Bruntland Commission Report, is the overarching or all-encompassing paradigm of the United Nations. It says that sustainable development is the development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable Development Goals have now become the most unifying principle for meeting the goals and targets of human development.
- It addresses the global challenges, including poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace, governance and justice.

SDGs and Inclusive Growth in Tourism

- Among 17 Sustainable Development Goals, SDG- 8 has been focused to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. The SDG has highlighted 12 targets and 17 indicators
- The **Target 9 of SDG 8** is to promote beneficial and sustainable tourism. **By 2030, it is expected to devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism** that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products. Tourism can be used as a multi-faceted development tool combining cultural heritages, ethno-cultural richness, natural attractions with great hospitality.
- Sri Lanka Tourism must be developed as an effective economic stimulator for rural development and its community wellbeing, local investments, generating income through local culture and lifestyle, food and cousin practices, handicraft and souvenirs etc.



Strategic Hubs and Sri Lanka Tourism



7 million Tourist Arrivals and a US\$ 10 billion Tourism Income by 2025

TARGET 8.9: PROMOTE BENEFICIAL AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

UN definition: By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products.

Tourism contribution to GDP

- **Indicator 8.9.1:** tourism direct GDP as a proportion of total GDP and in growth rate.
- **Goal:** By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products.
- **More research:** Further data and research on this topic can be found at the Our World in Data entry on Tourism.

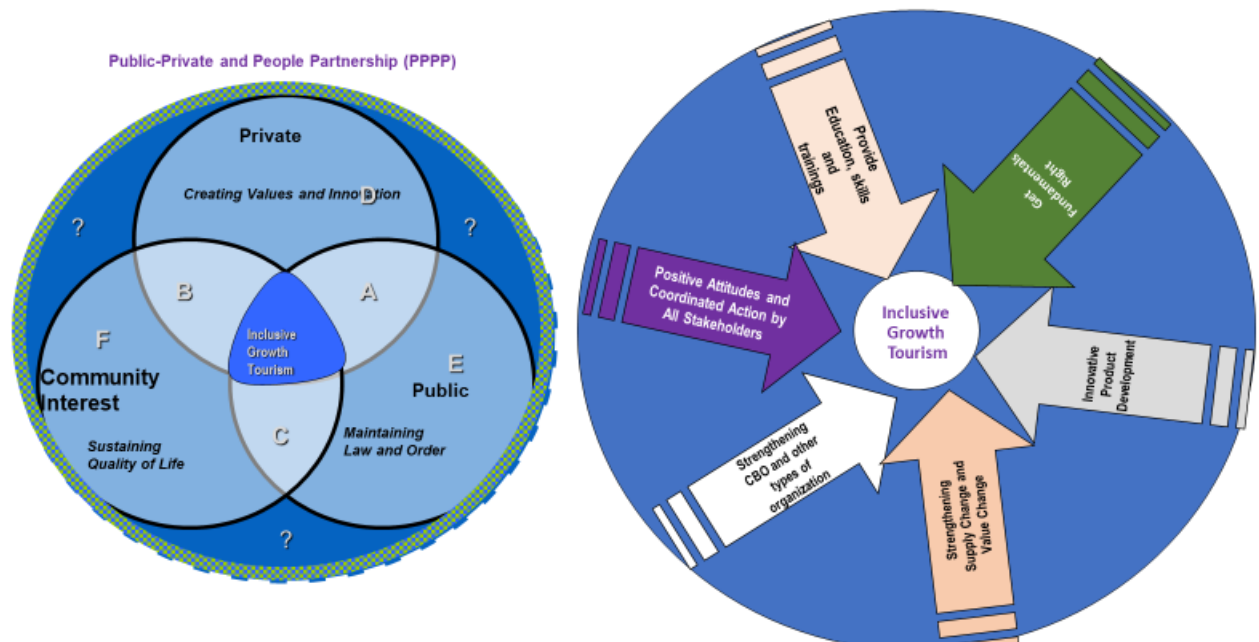
Sustainable tourism jobs

- **Indicator 8.9.2:** The proportion of jobs in sustainable tourism industries out of total tourism jobs.
- **Goal:** By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products.

Sri Lanka Tourism for Inclusive Growth: The Way Forward

- A simple and straightforward way to promote tourism for inclusive growth is to ensure that Sri Lanka Tourism grows at a strong and sustainable rate with **fair distribution of growth benefits** to the marginalized and vulnerable segments of tourism industry.
- The inequality and inclusiveness are specifically addressed in **SDG8: 'To promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all'**. It must be noteworthy for Sri Lanka Tourism to explore the possible strategies and policy measures to make necessary conducive arrangement and to do best possible stimulation to reach the targets under the SDG 8.
- Tourism for Inclusive Growth must comprise **both outcomes and processes**, involving participation of the marginalized and vulnerable segments of Sri Lanka Tourism with **fair benefit-sharing**.
- Furthermore, tourism for inclusive growth must be deeply related to **pro-poor tourism development** with the shared prosperity.
- **"Get the Fundamentals Right"** of Sri Lanka Tourism at national, regional and local levels.
- Rely on **human capital development** with more attention on **pro-poor tourism employment**
- Be **responsive and responsible** to promote **SME tourism investment** and **community-based entrepreneurship** development
- Increase the **efficacy of tourism education, training, innovation** to ensure tourism for inclusive growth.

Key Principles of Inclusive Growth Tourism



- Sri Lanka Tourism must capitalize the Emerging Trends and Patterns in Post-COVID Global Tourism and should **Never Waste A Good Crisis**
- Ensure all **policy measurers and strategies** capitalize Sri Lanka's **"So Much in So Little"**, but understand that **"So Much to Do"**
 - Maintaining Professional Discipline and Business Ethics

- Keeping Trust on Local Resources and Local Wisdom
- Enhance the Resilience Building and Tolerability of through Sustainable Tourism Development Practices
- Promote New Tourism Products and Activities with Memorable Experiences
- Synergize the Innovation and Sustainability Together
- Ensure the Safety and Security as the First Priority of the industry
- Strengthen the Innovative Cooperate Business Sector with Entrepreneurial New Public Service Management
- Provide the Financial Liquidity for Employers and Protect Tourism Employments

Finally, broad-based inclusive growth in tourism must be able to obtain the active participation of widest range of people and places to contribute for a great success in tourism development and also to create the best possible benefit to all communities or every segment of the industry from such development too. If so, it can ensure the prosperity of Sri Lanka Tourism meaningfully with greater equity in opportunities and outcomes.