

THE POSSIBILITIES OF CULTURAL TOURISM TO CONSTRUCT PEACE: CEASE STUDY IN KATARAGAMA DIVISION, MONARAGALA DISTRICT, SRI LANKA

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Abstract

This paper explores the potentials in cultural tourism in Sri Lanka to foster peace. The methodological approach taken to answer the research question was based on grounded theory. Kataragama and Detagamuwa Grama Sewaka Divisions (GSDs) within Kataragama Secretariat Division (SD) of Sri Lanka in Monaragala district have been the major historical sites to nurture the emerging theory of the study. In the hidden face of those sites the researcher has explored the potentials which could blur the margins of division between ethnic groups in Sri Lanka and channel the conscientization process to rediscover a common inheritance and identities. Main argument in this article is that the cultural tourism leads to inter cultural understanding, developing mutual relations and building trust among each other. Since the existing peace building approaches are more political, cultural tourism is a strategy could be developed in to practical achievement of the goals of peace building. Study suggests and predicts the implications for managing and designing cultural tourism in the aspects of peace.

Keywords: *Conflict transformation, Ethnic groups, Grounded theory, Peace, Cultural tourism.*

1. INTRODUCTION

This article examines how the way of promoting cultural tourism in Sri Lanka has connected with the process of nation-building and how it has influenced the ethnic polarization and the potentials it has to redirect the country towards peaceful coexistence by alleviating stereotypic attitudes and promoting mutual respect and understanding. Sri Lankan conflict is between the majority ethnic group Sinhalaese and a minority Tamils. They both

have cohabitated Sri Lankan soil from time immemorial. The causes for more than thirty-five year old ethnic conflict are multiple and complex. A major causative factor for the conflict in post-colonial era is the failure to integrate minority groups in to the mainstream of nation state building. This paper scrutinizes the problems encountered in the Sri Lankan nation building process with particular concern in to its peculiarity and uniqueness.

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