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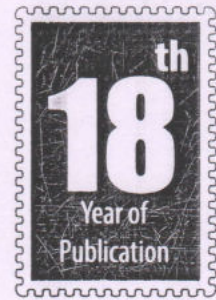
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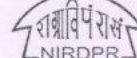


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66

Social Exclusion of Muslims in India: A Study of Ghettos

Zainab Farhat, Research Scholar, Department of Public policy, Law and Governance, Central University of Rajasthan, Bandarsindri, Kishangarh, Ajmer, Rajasthan and **Prof. Nagendra Ambedkar Sole**, Dean, School of Social Sciences, Department of Public policy, Law and Governance, Central University of Rajasthan

71

The Study of Socio-Political Activism of Roma Gypsies in Spain

Dr. Santosh. D. Sabale, Asst. Professor, Centre for Educational Studies, Indian Institute of Education, Kothrud, Pune

79

Dalit Pursuit for Social Mobility: An Overview of Social Revolution of Dalits

Vineeth Thomas, Doctoral Fellow, Department of Politics and International Studies, Pondicherry University

85

Tribal Education in India: The Role of NGOs

Dr. G. Sundharavadeivel, Associate Professor, Dept. of Adult and Continuing Education, University of Madras

89

Higher Education in the Era of Globalization: The Case of Kerala

Thanzeela Ebrahim K, Faculty of Commerce, M.E.S Asmabi College, P.Vemballur, Kerala

93

Obstacles on the Way to Success of Right to Education: Experiments in Odisha

Dr. Laxminarayan Bindhani, Assistant Professor, Department of Public Administration, B.N.M.A. Degree College, Paliabindha, Bhadrak

96

Social Media Recruiting: A Critical Review

Dr. Nilanjan Sengupta, Professor of HRM, SDM Institute for Management Development, Mysore, Karnataka and **Dr. Mousumi Sengupta**, Professor of HRM, SDM Institute for Management Development, Mysore, Karnataka

102

Work-Life Balance: A Study of Its Implications for Women Employees in Utkal Alumina International Ltd, Odisha

Dr. Padmalaya Mahapatra, Associate Professor Dept. of Public Administration, Utkal University, Bhubaneswer, and **Rashmi Rekha Das**, (Doctoral Fellow-JRF), Dept. of Public Administration, Utkal University, Bhubaneswer

108

Unemployment Problem And Tourism Industry In India: A Qualitative Evaluation

Dr. Amit K. Chakrabarty, Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, Chakdaha College, Nadia, West Bengal

112

Segmentation Strategy for Promotion of Ecotourism Products: Evidence from Thenmala Ecotourism

Dr. Manoj P.K., Assistant Professor, Department of Applied Economics, Cochin University of Science and Technology

120

Prospects of Haryana Region to be acknowledged as International Tourism Destination

Dr. Renu Malra, Assistant Professor, Department of Tourism, University College, Kurukshetra University, Haryana

122

Initiatives for a Better Tourism Order: The Case of Sri Lanka

M.R.B. Anantha Padmanabha, Deputy Editor, South Asian Journal of Socio-Political Studies and **Dr. M.R. Biju**, Editor, South Asian Journal of Socio-Political Studies

128

Predictors of Behavioural Intention of Health Tourists

Dr. Padmasani, Assistant Professor, School of Commerce, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore and **Remya.V.**, Senior Research Fellow, School of Commerce, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore



Initiatives for a Better Tourism Order: The Case of Sri Lanka

M.R.B. Anantha Padmanabha, Deputy Editor, South Asian Journal of Socio-Political Studies and
Dr. M.R. Biju, Editor, South Asian Journal of Socio-Political Studies

Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries globally, including in the developing world. It has grown faster than world gross domestic product since the 1950s with expenditure on tourist goods and services representing some 8 per cent of total world export receipts and 5 per cent of world GDP. Wen and Tisdell rightly observed that this is due to rising global incomes, increasing leisure time, a rising world population, fall in real transport costs, reduced travel time and globalisation. Many developing countries have recognised the possible contribution that this industry can make to economic development and have included it as an integral part of their development strategies. As a result, over the last two decades, an extensive body of literature on issues surrounding this industry in developing countries has been built up. Employment generation, foreign exchange earnings and community welfare are aspects of tourism-induced development considered in most of the relevant literature.

However, the possible contribution of the tourism industry is heavily influenced by international economic and political stability, as well as by terrorist threats and civil unrest in the tourist destination. There is a widespread view among the tourism analysts that international visitors are very concerned about their personal safety and thus this industry can only thrive under peaceful conditions.

Further, tourism is one of the major foreign exchange earners and main growth sector for many countries especially the small islands which are rich with required natural and cultural resources. The world tourism market has grown at an average of 3.7 per cent over the past five years and

is projected to grow by an average of 4.9 cent over the next five years, with Asia and the Pacific regions recording the fastest growth rate. According to World Travel and Tourism Council Travel and Tourism activity was hit hard by the global slump, Even so, the sector worldwide still provided over 235 million jobs last year.

Tourism remains the fastest growing service industry in the economies of most of developing countries. Hence, more research has gone into the operations of the sector in order to examine its economic significance and potential. It is known that the industry provides an important impetus to growth in other sectors such as agriculture, transportation, retailing and manufacturing and is therefore seen as a key component of economic development. It plays a major role for the generation of foreign exchange which directly facilitates the improvement of foreign reserves of said economies. Similarly, the sector has shown greater improvements in employment generation both directly and indirectly. Revenue accruing to tourist sites, and increase in number of hotels and similar establishments and other tourism supply establishments.

Against this backdrop, this paper attempts to present :

- Sri Lanka's comparative position in global tourism market;
- The composition of its tourists arrivals by area of origin, the extent of foreign earnings;
- The extent of employment generation by this industry;
- Regional aspects of the tourism sector;
- Several discussion on the current trends and future prospects; and
- The hurdles that have hindered the growth and development hospitality

sector etc.

- An attempt has also been made to explore the recent phases of tourism industry especially after the end of civil war.

Tourism in Sri Lanka

Tourism in Sri Lanka is growing rapidly for centuries. Sri Lanka has been a popular place of attraction for foreign travelers. The famous Chinese traveler Fa-Hien arrived in Sri Lanka in the late 4th century. In the twelfth century, Italian explorer Marco Polo claimed that Sri Lanka to be the "best island of its size in the world". In view of its fascinating scenic beauty and rich cultural heritage, Sri Lanka is one of the best tourist destinations in the world.

In 2012, "post office worldwide" holiday costs barometer named Sri Lanka as the best valued destination for holidays. In 2013 the popular travel guide book Lonely Planet named Sri Lanka as the best travel destination for 2013. According to the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2015 Sri Lanka is at 63 out of 141 countries.

Sri Lanka's independence the promotion of tourism was again considered by re-establishing the Ceylon Tourist Board which took over the function of the Tourist Bureau. More formal recognition for the country's tourism sector was given with the enactment of Act No. 10 of 1966. This provided the legislation for the establishment of Ceylon Tourist Board. Since then the Ceylon Tourist Board has functioned as the state agency, responsible for development and promotion of the tourism sector in Sri Lanka.

In October 2007 according to Section 2 of the Tourism Act No. 38 of 2005, the Sri Lanka Tourist Board (Act No 10 of 1966) was replaced by the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA).