

# **The Environmental Impact and Social Challenges of Coastal Tourism in Pasikudah**

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## **Abstract**

Coastal tourism development and management is an massive complex phenomenon which throw threatening towards marine life, habitat conservation and social stability. Sri Lanka is a wealthy country based on the resources that have itself. Natural beauty is the major influence of its economy. Though the nation is facing social related issues along with the less per capita, it manages to improve its fundamental facilities, basic needs and wellbeing of people. This paper is mainly considering to tourism for being one of the major economic sectors in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka has the capability to satisfy the need of travelers with its natural beauty. Though there are numerous destinations for the tourism, this study focused on the Pasikudah tourist place in Batticaloa. Even though the tourism of the study area giving lots of benefits to the individuals, there are diverse impacts on environment and social well-being. Therefore, by using primary and secondary data this study involved in identifying the core issues and challenges of tourism in Pasikudah and the surrounded settlement areas. Primary data played a major role to identify the negative and positive impacts whilst the secondary data used to identify the parallel situation of tourism and integration of tourist places. Eventually the study concluded with the overall analysis of data. Positive impacts influenced by the native folks for their economy and negative impacts were identified in the environment degradation and land use. Migration, mangrove and coral reefs destruction occurring gradually in the Pasikudah region. There is a drastic increase in the arrival of tourist in Pasikudah area from 2009 after the civil war. Hence the sustainable tourism in Pasikudah is still a chance to be executed. Changing the tourism industry through the eco-tourism in the tourism industry in Pasikudah region will be the best solution.

**Keywords: tourism, environment, impact, development, sustainability**

## **1. Introduction**

The term “Tourism” identified as the temporary movement of people to their preferred destination outside their normal living place for some leisure (Alister & Geoffrey, 1992). People tend to visit places to be released from their distressful lifestyle. The places called as tourist destination since the place having high amount of people throughout the years. The natural beauty or artificial technology attract the people towards some particular places around the world. To thank to those places most of the nation gain economic benefits via tourism. Tourism is one of the most important components of the global economy. It is considered by many communities, especially in developing countries. Tourism is one of the reasons for increasing the quality of the life. It gives many positive as well as negative impacts not only to human life but also to the physical environment (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2004).

Sri Lanka is very famous for its natural beauty and native products. Tourism is one of the vital part in Sri Lankan economy. Sri Lankan tourism identified as a fifth economic sector in generating income for the nation (Kaleel, 2014). All the regional, foreign, national and diaspora tourists visit to the most attractive places in Sri Lanka. There are cultural heritages places, naturally attractive places, beautiful coastal regions, natural recreational centers and some artificial technological destinations lead the Sri Lankan tourism. Pasikudah is one of the famous beaches in Sri Lanka. It has high attention among both local and international tourists. The tourism of Sri Lanka had a rapid growth after the civil war. Sri Lanka’s tourism is creating a significant positive impact on the level of employment and income foreign exchange earnings, government revenue and also social benefits to the society. Sri Lankan tourism earning represents more than 2% of the GDP (Gross Domestic Product). It also accounts more than 1.3% of the total employment of the labor of the country. Tourism is the fourth highest foreign exchange generator of the Sri Lanka economy (The Tourism Development Authority, 2011).

The development of the tourism industry is highly vital to upgrade the standard of living of the local people living in Batticaloa district. As well as Pasikudah tourist area is rapidly developing and getting urbanizing. There are suitable areas in the Batticaloa district to set up beach resorts similar to Pasikudah. Since the end of the civil war in 2009 and the completion of tsunami rehabilitation project, Pasikudah has become a popular tourist destination among local foreigners. Through May of 2009, tourist arrivals were 20% below those of 2008 (Don et al., 2001). The development of tourism cannot be excluded from the natural environment but our actions will create a distance among the natural environment and development. The tourism needs to encourage the natural environment and social economy of a region in a healthy way. Due to the behavior and greedy need of the people environment degradation and depletion highly occur in the tourist areas. Pasikudah is not an exceptional in Sri Lanka. It also getting depleted through tourism. Alternate tourism is more suitable to reduce the disadvantages of high level environmental centers than the massive tourism industry. According to the tourism development authority of Sri Lanka, 654447 and 855975 tourist arrivals have been recorded in 2010 and 2011 respectively (The Tourism Development Authority, 2011).

Therefore, it is our responsibility to be ecologically protected because it is a growing industry. Since the tourism in Pasikudah depended on the natural beauty of the environment, it should be highly considerate. Although the trend of protecting the environment to increase the quality and quantity of the outcome is different, the environmental tourism industry generally increases the quality of the resources through the diversity of the organisms. Especially marine and coastal tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors around the world. The world's largest industry get despite increased awareness of the economic and environmental significance of tourism, it is only in current years scientific researchers have emerged (HALL, 2001).

Pasikudah “Green Algae- bay” is located in the east latitude of  $7^{\circ} 55' 42''$  N and North Longitude of  $81^{\circ} 33' 42''$  E in the eastern coastal part of Batticaloa district, Koraleipatru DS division and Kalkuda Grama Niladhari division. Pasikudah destination is one of the coastal tourist area in Sri Lanka which is located 35 kilometers north west of Batticaloa. Alongside to the bay there is a historical small Tamil village. Pasikudah is being a popular tourist destination from the beginning, however suffered huge devastation during 2004 Indian ocean Tsunami and the Sri Lankan civil war in 2009 (Wikipedia, 2017).

Foreign travelers could easily reach the destination since there is a nearby airport which has scheduled flights operating from Colombo Bandaranaike International Airport. During the summer season Pasikudah is such a fabulous coastal tourist place. The sea is calm, the weather is fine and sea-surf are possible in May - October. The region attracts many tourist due to its natural and varnished beauty. Through tourism employment opportunities for many people have also increased in the region. Development of this place highly depending on the Pasikudah.

Even though the tourist destination providing much more economic benefits, social well-being and standard of living through the socialization, there are constant negative impacts have been identified in the area. The native people and the study area often face social problem, cultural issues, loss of biodiversity and environment

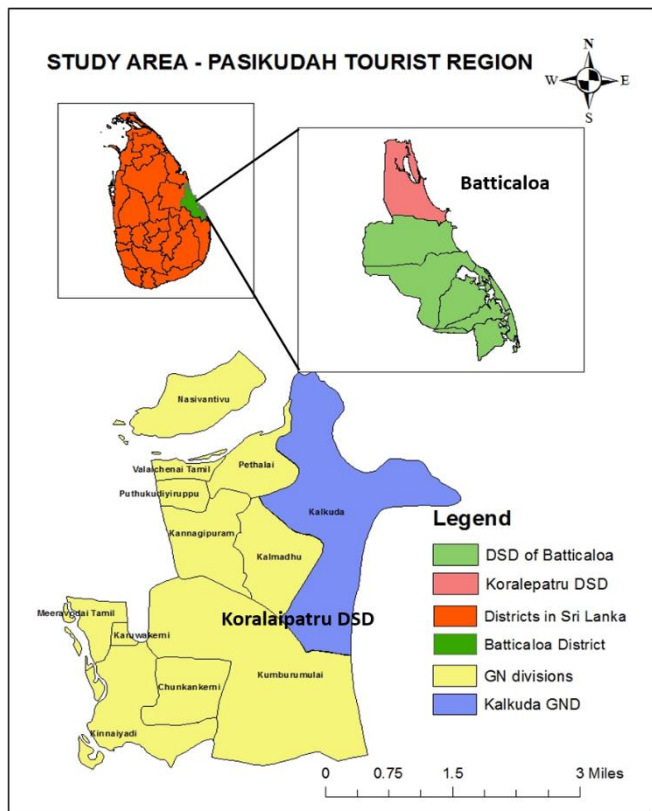


Fig 1: The Spatial location of the Study Area

degradation, etc. Therefore this study has been conducted to identify the core issues and find suitable solutions for the identified problems. As well as, to fulfill the research gap that has been opened until now. There is a main objective and a sub objective lead the research:

- The main objective of this study is to identify the core issues and challenges of tourism in Pasikudah tourist place and the surrounded settlement areas.
- Sub objective is to identify causes for the environmental changes and alteration of the study area.

The sub purpose of this approach is to use the resources in this area to be balanced as to improve the living standards of the area and the people of the region and reducing environmental issues in this tourism area. This study will further enhance tourism in the context of environmental and social issues identified in the Pasikudah tourism sector. To identify the ecological benefits of this tourism industry as well as to find the negative and diverse effects on the native folks.

## **2. Literature Review**

This research is a sub part of the massive concept “Tourism” in Sri Lanka. There are plenty of books, Journals, publications, articles have been updated regarding the tourism and tourist destination of Sri Lanka. Since the study only concern about the Pasikudah tourist place in Batticaloa, it mainly focused to duly fill the gap of contemporary need of the study of tourism in the selected region.

USAID (United States Agency for International Development) (2012), summarized a book titled “Tourism income generating and business opportunity mapping in Batticaloa district” it mainly focused on the national tourism in Sri Lanka and the approach of international tourist in Batticaloa. As well as the overview of the Sri Lanka’s tourism sector. Main objective is to identify the rate of people’s desire for tourism in Batticaloa and the benefits of tourism. And they concluded with that Batticaloa district has plenty of tourist destination to attract both domestic and foreign tourism.

Managing the tourism leads to economic growth and environment protection. Both the aspect could help for the sustainable tourist management. Under the topic of “The Management of Tourism” Lestey and Richard in the year of 2005 pointed out the system of tourism, impacts of travel and the structure of the tourism. Their objectives are to understand and recognize tourism business and then to scale the tourism impacts. They have been identified systematic way of managing the tourism and define the term tourism in a unique way. Significance and the scale of tourism has been identified mainly rather than the impact therefore this study mainly focusing on the environment socio impact.

Though several studies have been conducted for the identification of the beneficiaries of tourism, some studies indicated the negative consequences of it. Alister and Geoffrey (1992) research about socio economic and physical impacts of tourism in their book titled “Tourism: economic, physical and social impacts” yet they concerned about the important and the wealth of tourism their main aspect was to identify the impacts they concluded with that planning for the proper tourism can be made for the long term consequences.

## **3. Materials and Methods**

This research rely on both quantitative and quantitative data. This research paper fundamentally based on primary research methods such as field survey, direct observation, questionnaire survey and interview with local people to obtain data. Through this research and innovative ideas, it would be easier to provide appropriate information for sustainable tourism in coastal tourist region in Pasikudah.

By promoting various forms of tourism with different strategies researchers concluded successful ideas. Therefore, Secondary data such as books, reports, journals, publications, articles and internet sources have been used for tourism related study. Further, the data been tabulated and analyzed by Arc GIS 10.3 and Excel software. Google earth images have been used for the location identification, spatial information and integration of map and for the identification of spatial information for the study.

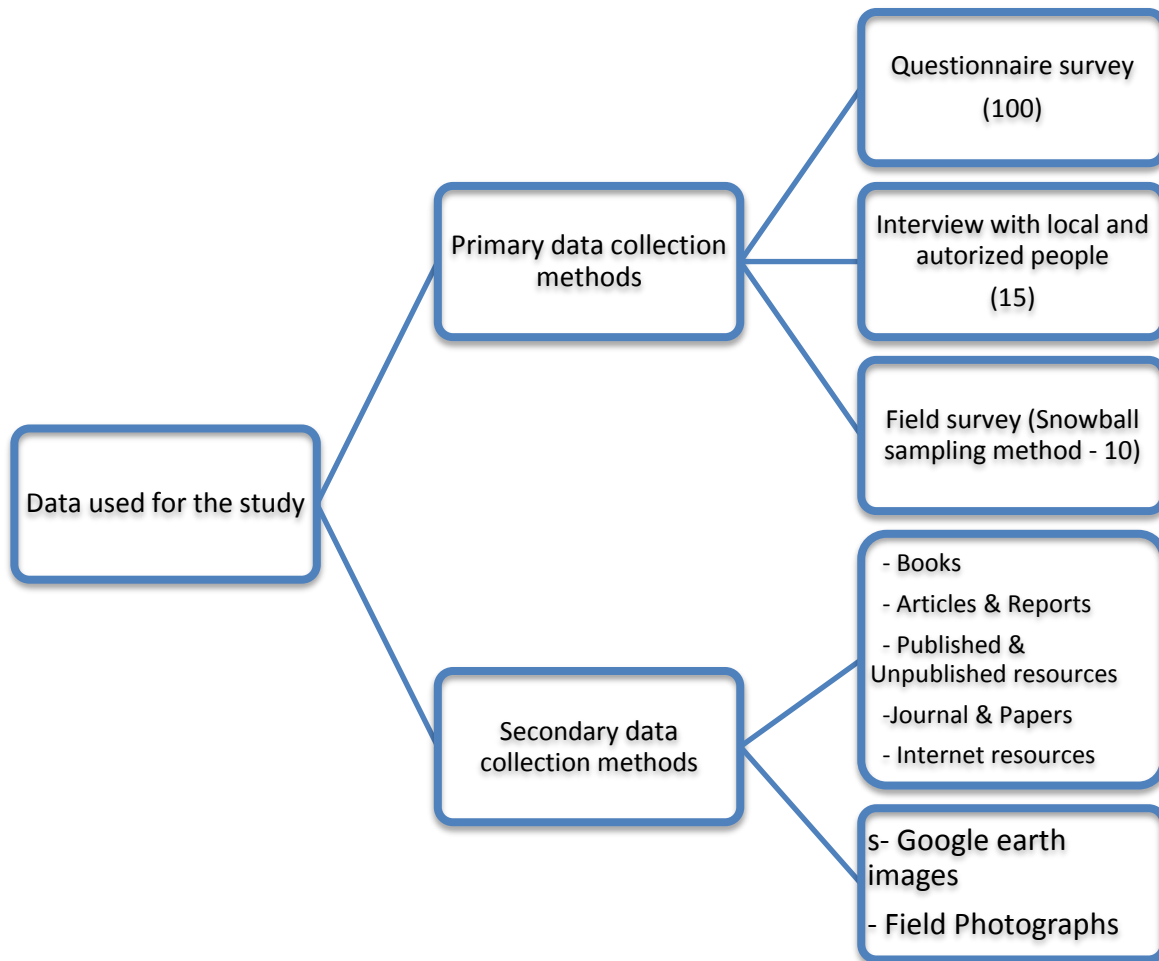


Fig 2: Flow chart of the methodology

The study area is situated in Kalkuda Grama Niladhari Division (GND). The native people from Kalkuda highly affected through the tourism therefore, according to the stratified random sampling method 100 questionnaire issued among them. The systematic survey strictly made with one person per household. The total population of the GN division is 23,730 (families - 7204) Through field observation and survey ten people have been identified for running micro business. Identifying one person is a chance to find another one through snowball sampling method. Few of them doing same types of business whilst some runs different shops.

Un structured interview done with some local people and the authorized people from the study area. Native people who are being appointed by tourism related jobs in tourist field, site showing, hotels, restaurants, transports and daily wages jobs. In this study the collected data through primary and secondary data collection presented in a tabular format. According to the main and sub objective of the study, descriptive statistic methods and simple statistic methods have been used for the representation. Also the data obtained by a few officers responsible for the development of this area is absorbed in some cases. People of the area have been embraced with the idea of development issues. the mode may be used for reducing vulnerability and promoting people for sustainable development of coastal tourism in Pasikudah region.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

Pasikudah is one of the fast developing and investors hub of foreign and local people. The Sri Lankan government strike through environmental policies have been promoted for the development to a certain extent. Current state of Pasikudah tourist region seems so much developed and visited by Numerous local and foreign tourists. Since the study is based on the impact of tourism there will be either positive and negative impacts. The coastal tourism have two type of impact such us: Positive and negative impacts.

#### 4.1. Positive impact of Coastal Tourism in Pasikudah

Attracting the attention of tourist is all about the impact of particular area. Tourism increases the awareness of environmental impact in the context of human activity (The International Ecotourism Society, 2008). Particularly, the industrial areas are focusing more on protecting the environment as per the guide of Central Environmental Authority. These changes are according to the acts as an environmental protection project in Pasikudah tourism.

And this is a positive impact for the area as well as for the people. This is an important step for tourism development.

Economic development with environmental protection is an important matter through the tourism industry. The tourism development make some positive impact

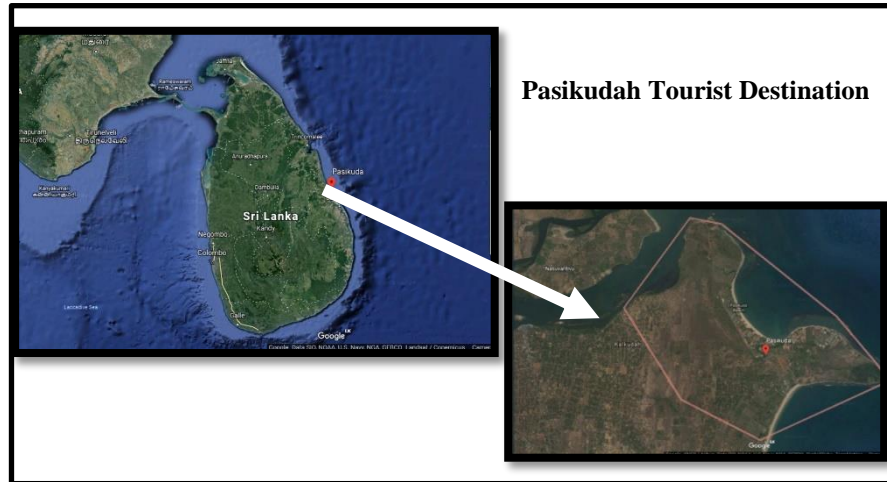


Fig 3: Location of the study area (Aerial view)

to the particular society and to the area. Pasikudah tourism area is the only area where people use a particular location and other areas are the preserved by some security guards. In that case people can access freely due to the tourism. Coastal buffer zoning, tree planting and conservation of mangroves are the productions of the coastal environment from the area. There is a small marshy landscape in Pasikudah which is providing economic benefit to the native folk of the area. Therefore Preservation of it is especially important. Many trees are in that area attracting tourist with its natural beauty. There are loads of attractive places in Pasikudah. Therefore, that need to be preserved and protected for further development and growth of the area. As well as these areas are identified for the degradation due to the high accessibility of people and often visit.

❖ Quality water resources:

The development of coastal tourism in Pasikudah will provide quality water for the purpose of drinking and other usages. Therefore, the arrival of tourists from various regions are essential for clean drinking water available here and it is a very positive impact in this region due to the coastal tourism.

❖ Scenic beauties and attraction inventories:

Strategies of local and provincial authorities to preserve and develop natural resource and attraction inventories. To enhance the tourism, the protection and preservation of scenic beauty is much more essential.

❖ Using Green concept:

Lower rated emissions, pollutions and waste management system and practices found locally. national level programs on preserving coastal resource.

❖ The area is covered with pleasant air to breathe with beautiful coconut trees. Ecological protection being carried out by the local government for the tourism.

Even though there are positive environmental impacts in Pasikudah due to the tourism development, There are evenly negative consequences exist. Each development process should consider the eco-friendly and sustainable process. Therefore, indicating the negative vibe of a precious area is an essential task.

#### 4.2. Negative impact of coastal tourism in Pasikudah

Whatever the positive impacts on economy and conservation of environment, tourism will have the same amount of negative impact. Coastal tourism have socio environment related negative impact to study area. Foreign and the domestic tourists both visit to the Pasikudah tourism site. Tourism in conflict due to the congested tourists. Tourism related physical changes and environment alterations are very common for a wide range of tourism infrastructure.

The physical environment is being collapse due to the massive number of tourists arrival. Minor physical alteration impacts including sand removal destruction of mangroves and ponds, damages the coral reefs and sea grass beds which helps fish breeding. Environment and the surrounding area get changed because of the rapid development. Therefore the habitat of wild living beings lost and there will be a biodiversity degradation. This region is rich in mangroves and aquatic environment. Over usage and frequent visit to the ecosystem is critical for its healthy existence. Solid waste inappropriate disposal from the surrounding areas causes the environment degradation. It leads to the unattractive atmosphere in the tourist area. Most of the trashes and garbage release from hotels, restaurants, nearby villages. This problem seems to be a common issue in most of the tourist destinations in Sri Lanka. Not only in the terrestrial ecosystem but also the virgin aquatic ecosystem experiencing solid waste problem. Due to the construction for the development, multi threatening occur in the study area. Loss of biodiversity and loss of migrated species are the major ecological problems. Hence, removal of native people form the site, altering their way of life and changing them for a different job and life seems to be a huge social issue in the area. People aren't tend to be adopt to the new environment and culture therefore most of the conflicts rose from the native people side.

#### 4.3 According to the analysis of secondary data

According to the current state of tourist arrival in the study area the above figure have been made. It is describing a thorough knowledge about the visitors who paying more interest vising the destination. foreign tourist are paying more attention to the Pasikudah tourist region rather than the Sri Lankan nationalities. domestic people represents only 8% of the total. More remarkably diaspora is contributing around 11.5% of arrivals. Another important matter is the facilities that have been provided by the tourist region. Therefore, Pasikudah tourism region include many construction of infrastructure building and other facilities such as many hotels, spa, restaurants and recreational centers and resort.

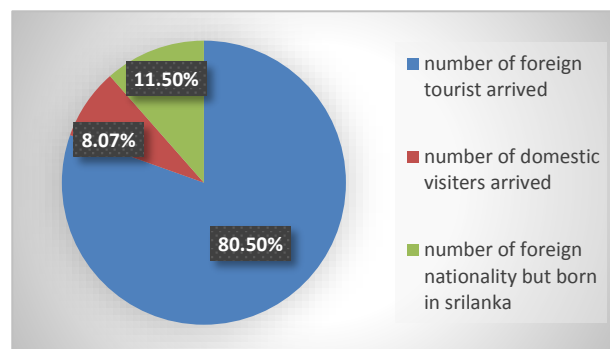


Fig 4: Distribution of tourist arrivals to Batticaloa district, Source: The Tourism Development Authority. (2011).

Table 1. Hotels and guest houses in Pasikudah region

No	Hotel & guest house
I	Anantaya resort and spa
II	The calm resort & spa
III	Maalu maalu resort & spa
IV	Uga bay by uga escapes
V	Sunrise by jet wing
VI	Marina beach Pasikudah
VII	Amethyst resort
VIII	Inn on the bay guesthouse
IX	Paasi bay hotel
X	Delight guest house & restaurant
XI	Ashram accommodation
XII	Amanda beach resort
XIII	Kayjay beach resort
XIV	Passikuda eco village hotel
XV	Laya waves
XVI	Aqua marine beach house
XVII	Yaswi guest house
XVIII	Vista bub yaswi guest house
XIX	John guest inn
XX	Hotel vasuhi
XXI	Nandawanam guest house
XXII	The new land hotel
XXIII	Simla guest house
XXIV	Victoriya guest house
XXV	Anilana passikudah
XXVI	Treatoo eco cottage
XXVII	Vista room Victoria guest

#### 4.4 According to the analysis of primary data

##### I. Loss of marine resource destruction:

The damage doesn't end with the construction of tourist infrastructure some tourist resorts release their sewage and other waste directly into water bodies. The surrounding coral reefs and other sensitive marine habitats recreational activities also have huge impact due to the unsafe disposal. For example, careless boating ,diving snorkeling and fishing have seriously damaged coral reefs. Through people touching reefs stirring up sediment, marine animals and birds are also disturbed by increased numbers of boats. Tourism can also add to the consumption of sea food in this area. Putting pressure on local fish production and sometimes over fishing causes the most marine resource depletion. The local people collecting the reefs and other shells from the shallow sea shore region for the selling purpose. These types of continuous acts will cause harm for the fish breeding. Also it effect the surrounding natural environment.



Fig 5: The tourists and fishers in Pasikudah

Marine resource and ocean resources which attract more foreign travelers are replenished in order to make them more secure. that is the great marine resources like the Valampuri charm and Sea Pearl is purchased by tourists who visit Pasikudah. There are some most important environment issues have been encountered with the help of village people. They argue those consequences are the results of all types of tourists visit.

## II. Bio diversity Concerns:

Tourism can cause loss of biodiversity in many ways. More specifically negative impact on biodiversity can be seen by various factors. Coastal area is an environmentally sensitive which lay between the land and sea characterized by a very huge amount of biodiversity. They include some of the richest and most fragile ecosystems on earth, like mangroves and coral reef.

- Very beneficial mangrove forests and sea grass meadows have been removed to create open beaches.
- Tourist development based recreational figures and other structures have been built directly on top of coral reef
- Nesting sites for endangered marine turtles have been destroyed and disturbed by large numbers of tourist on the beaches.



Fig 7: Beach side small shops

It's also said that these types of environmental changes and livelihood of the people of the region was not present at the earliest time, There were more wildlife species could be able to encountered such as Peacock, Deer and sparrow. This made the clear idea that the most significant environmental impact occur.



Fig 6: Coastal shore pollution in Pasikudah

The natural ecosystem have been altered by the tourism developers and the tourists. Tourists wade out from the beach on to the reef flats at low tide. They are walking on living organisms, a mass of broken coral skeletons on the reef floor are covered with a brown –grey coating of algae. Due to the green algae and coral reefs this Pasikudah beach identified as one of the most attractive beaches in Sri Lanka. But, today there is seemingly beautiful natural ecosystem has changed in this area due to the improper tourism activities.

## III. Displacement of native people

The native people form the study area had been removed due to the development of tourism long ago. Still the same occur but not forcefully but volunteer. Migrated people from the study area are not satisfied with the



facilities and benefits they gain through tourism. Most of the native people rely on the tourism related jobs. Some have benefits and profits whilst other gain nothing but poverty. Some people gather the sea shells and coral reefs for the production of fancy items and sell them for the tourists. Most of the native folks claim to have lost their places due to the building construction and establishments of hotels and resorts. Though they have been migrated to other places they cannot spend a normal lifestyle due to the economic problems.

## VI. Benefits for native people via tourism

Some native people who does business for the living, gain more economic benefits through the tourism. As well as fishermen and hotel owner also having economic benefits through the coastal tourism in Pasikudah. Therefore the Pasikudah tourism not only causing problems to the environment and people but also providing much more benefits to the entire village. According to the questionnaire survey and field visit, some salesman have been agreed that they are getting more benefits whilst some are not having much profit. According to the given Fig 7. Sales man’s profitability have been indicated. In that case, it is visible that medium profit gaining people are higher than the low and highest profitable salesmen. They insist that the tourist arrival needs to be much more in numbers since they can earn more through business. The people tend to like and support the tourism development in Pasikudha. These comments were noticed while interviewing them.

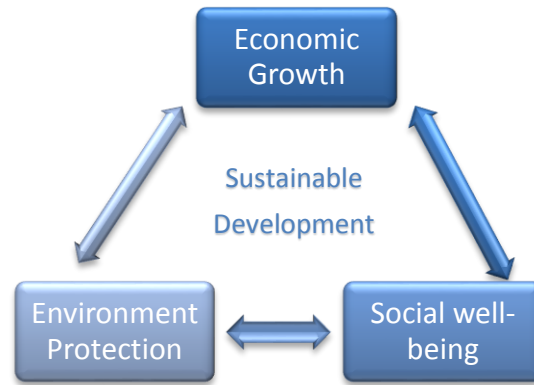


Fig 8: sustainable development triangle

Similarly, the study area Pasikudah coastal region one of Sri Lanka’s leading tourism spots, Enhancing the positive impacts and preventing and decreasing the negative impacts can show the clear path to the tourism development in the study area. This research claiming to show a way for the sustainable development and potential growth in the study area.

While sustainable development is a very brief concept, it easier to apply if the stakeholders involve. The below triangle makes a clear explains how sustainable demonstrates and how the economy maintains balance between the environmental and the community. Though each area in this triangle is unique, they rely on one another for long- term sustainable development. Setting up a three- dimensional facility in a stand along hotel where the ecological tourism has three component and benefits to modern and future generation.

Sustainable development meets the need of present tourism in Pasikudah region. Tourism development can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and live support system. Sustainable tourism development meets the need of present tourism and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future. “Full filling the needs of the present generation without thinking the ability of future generation will always leads to a unsuccessful development”.

While questioning the native people regarding the impacts of tourism, most of them agreed that they get more positive impacts rather than negative consequences. Environmentally there are some bottlenecks have been identified by the researchers

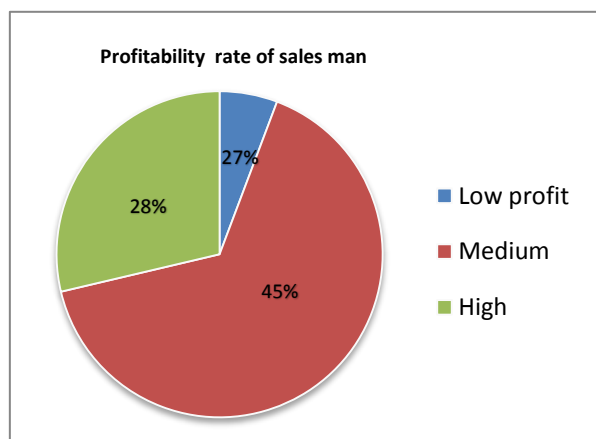


Fig 7: Salesmen’s profit rate

and the villagers. Socially the native folks got high level economic benefits rather than the losses.

Therefore, the tourism may cause harm and give beneficiaries to the surrounding villages since the destination and the located area is famous for the tourism.

## 5. Conclusion

Tourism and the tourist industry has a huge fame for the relaxation and recreational activities. Tourism is a collection of activities services and industries that delivers a travel experience, including transportation, accommodation eating and drinking establishment, retail shops, entertainment business activity facilities and other hospitality. According to this tourism sector development and successful each and every developing countries will gain more economic benefits. These tourism sectors include some of important field such as environment, socio and economic filed. This Pasikudah coastal tourism has a positive and negative consequences through tourism. Some of the native people suffering due to the migration and displacements while the others having economic benefits. The location also got changed and urbanized due to the tourism development. But the same played the major role for the destruction of environment.

Therefore, in this research it has been identified that the existence of some environment and social related positive and negative impacts in the study area. As a solution for the problem the “Sustainable development” can be processed.

### Suggestion for preventing and reducing the negative environment impact of costal tourism in Pasikudah

Improved environmental management and planning environmental management of tourism facilities and especially hotels can increase benefits to natural areas. But this requires careful planning for controlled development based on analysis of the environmental resources of this area. Planning helps to make choices between conflicting uses or to find ways to make them compatible. By planning early for tourism development damaging and expensive mistakes can be prevented, avoiding the gradual deterioration of environmental assets significant to tourism. “Green Tourism” and “Smart Growth” can be applicable in the coastal tourist region all around the island. The Green Tourism entails a type of use that minimize negative impacts on the environment and on local people. Hence, conservation and preservation of natural resources and environmentally sensible area will lead to a proper tourism management.

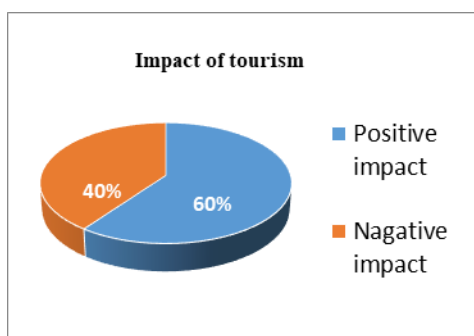


Fig.8: The impact of Tourism

Strict environmental standards for solid liquid and gaseous waste emissions. Re plantation, Re-forest activities should be promoted in the Pasikudah region. Proper maintenance and proper waste disaposal would be better in the accommodate areas in the study region. Training the villagers regarding hospitality services is required besides promoting awareness about keep coastal tourism sector in Pasikudah. Rural tourism region has become one of the famous tourist destinations in Sri Lanka.

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