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Exploring the Potential of Geotourism with a Focus on Kahagolla Landslides Area in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Geotourism is a new type of tourism based on geological features. As such, the primary goal of this research is to identify the possibility of converting protected natural hazard areas into profitable Geotourism sites. A geologic hazard visible in the geological environment is a natural event that occurs within the earth's crust which poses a threat to life and property. One such example is landslides. The Kahagolle landslide area is 3.5 ha in size and landslide prevention and mitigation activities have been conducted here as part of a Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) project costing millions of rupees. The attractiveness and profitability of this location lie in the availability of different landslide mitigation methods within a single area. Located along the Beragala-Hali Ela highway (A16) in close proximity to Haputale and Bandarawela, the site has the potential to attract many domestic as well as international tourists who visit the central hills of Sri Lanka. This was an inductive study using field observations as primary data, and content analysis of published papers and NBRO documents that have been used as secondary, qualitative data. The main conclusion drawn based on the results is that there certainly is a possibility of improving this area as a Geotourism site aimed at foreign and local tourists mainly for educational purposes. The recommendation is to build an information center with the capacity to raise awareness and enhance knowledge about the history of this landslide, the geological quality of the area along with details of the mitigation project. As such, tickets could be issued, and the site arranged into zones from top to bottom while the methods used could be shared with visitors.

Keywords: Geotourism, Landslides as tourist sites, Mitigation activities