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Nature Tourism and Neighborhood Sustainability in Residents' Perspective: A Case Study in Imbulpe Divisional Secretariat Division, Balangoda**Senarathna G.G.O.I. *, Weerakoon K.G.P.K.***Department of Estate Management and Valuation University of Sri Jayewardenepura,
Nugegoda, Sri Lanka***osuriimeshani@gmail.com***Abstract**

More than half of the world's population lives in cities and wealthy countries, accounting for more than 80% of the global population. As a result, tourism now plays a vital role in de-stressing congested urban life. Hence, people renewed focus on enjoying their leisure time outdoors for mental and physical relaxation, nature-based tourism emerged in the tourism industry. Sri Lanka is a naturally rich country and a great tourist attraction for natural hotspot areas for bird watching, photography, stargazing, camping, hiking, hunting, fishing, visiting parks, etc. These attracted naturally rich places located in rural areas, and basic infrastructure is the main requirement of these areas. There is a lack of government involvement in those areas, which has resulted in haphazard development. This situation affected to reduce the natural beauty of that area and will cause many environmental, social-cultural, and other problems. In addition, this high tourist demand negatively and positively affected the neighbourhood sustainability of these areas. It needs to be measured from the resident's perspective, and there is a lack of research about analysis about that, and this research focused on that research gap. The province of Sabaragamuwa is one of the most environmentally rich and sensitive provinces in the country. All Divisional Secretariat divisions in the province are environmentally rich. Imbulpe D.S. division in Balangoda, is an environmentally rich area that has been chosen as a case study location. In this area, there are numerous hotspot locations associated with nature tourism, and the first step was to identify them. Many neighborhoods surround these hotspot zones, and their viewpoints are considered while judging the viability of the neighborhood. The information was collected by observation and a questionnaire survey that focused on the surrounding neighbourhood's environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects. A qualitative technique was utilized to identify hotspot areas, and statistical analysis was used to identify neighbourhood influence on multiple variables. Results show that environmental impact is critical, and the community is not satisfied because it directly influences their neighbourhoods. In addition, the socio-cultural implications also create a considerable effect on their area. However, the community is pleased with the economic impact. Research findings revealed that nature tourism is the most important income source in the country. But it is directly affected in the neighbourhood in those areas. These income generation sources need to streamline sustainably. Need to protect environmental values and socio-cultural status in communities while improving their income.

Keywords: Nature tourism, Neighbourhood, Sustainability, Socio-economic, Environmental