Tourism and development

Socio-economic scene

Sher Aazad

Liberty

Central Environmental Authority

Since the end of the separatist conflict, the number of tourists arriving in the island has increased exponentially. In fact, even the rate of increase appears to be increasing slightly.

A meeting to Tourism Minister Maduwanth Abeysinghe, tourist arrivals for the past season (November to April) is 2009-10 were 27 percent greater than the previous year, while the figures for 2010-11 were 48 percent higher than that.

Monthly tourist arrivals reached an all-time peak last December, rising to 237,000, a figure that remained unchanged for the first two months of 2011.

The Tourism Board expects 3.3 million tourists by 2016, up from 600,000 in 2010. This requires an annual growth rate of 25 percent which, if realised, would be quite significant for a variety of reasons.

One major, and paradoxical, factor is that 35 years of warfare have given Sri Lanka an entrepreneurial spirit that is, in my opinion, largely the result of the need to keep a low profile - although there may be as many things as bad publicity as well as good to say about the latter.

Comprehensive holiday package

Secondly, this island offers a comprehensive holiday package within a small area, a variety of climates, sea and sand and all the elements of culture, wildlife and adventure that are so popular for many tourists.

There is no other place in the world that has Sri Lanka’s unique combination in such a compact form.

Thirdly, Sri Lanka is, in comparison to other destinations, cheap. It compares favourably with Thailand, which is the main target in South and Southeast Asia for re-orientating tourists from other countries.

Maldives International Airport in Malé has been commissioned, it will allow the handling of Airbus A330 aircraft. These Super

West coast (which accounts for 70 percent of tourist nights) to Colombo in the North-West.

The coastal areas are almost devoid of tourist accommodation; video as an almost all-year-round tourist destination.

Experts from the tourist sector have pointed out that the process of constructing a hotel takes up to two years, so the more target might be unrealistic.

They suggest that the additional rooms requirement (if any) be cut down to a more manageable 10,000 if the focus moves away from the scramble to entertain government ministers, the hoteliers and the like.

In addition to this, nearly 11,000 rooms are planned to be erected at the rate of 3,000 to 7,500 per year, progressively for 45,000 average-sized hotel rooms. In addition to this, nearly 11,000 rooms are estimated to be erected.

South-West coast

Deputy Economic Development Minister Lahiru Wickramasinghe was quoted as saying that the government had recently started a development project to attract foreign tourists to the South-West coast. Wickramasinghe said that the government hoped to attract more tourists to the region by improving the availability of suitable accommodation.

In the past, the hotel sector has about 15,000 rooms, while there are about 4,000 rooms to supplementary establishments. The government says that a total of 35,000 hotel rooms will be required by 2016.

In other words, the country needs an additional 20,000 hotel rooms, and that will be built at the rate of 3,000 to 7,500 per year, progressively for 45,000 average-sized hotel rooms. In addition to this, nearly 11,000 rooms are planned to be erected at the rate of 3,000 to 7,500 per year, progressively for 45,000 average-sized hotel rooms. In addition to this, nearly 11,000 rooms are planned to be erected.

Unemployment, the experts tend to ignore a vital resource that we have in many people. The general population only benefits from tourism if they are employed in the sector at a viable job from the point of view of the economy.

Tsunami-affected areas

The government should keep the "unemployed" or "retired" hotel sector, providing householders and small entrepreneurs incentive to convert or build small guest houses.

This sector does not require the huge capital expenditure required in general tourism.

There is a potential for a large number of small accommodation units in the tsunami-affected areas, as the rehabilitation plan is to build small, humble guest houses.

It should be pointed out that Sri Lanka and the British government and the international community has spent millions of dollars on the rehabilitation of the tsunami-affected areas.

There is no reason why this could not happen here if the government would be given a chance. It will allow the building of small, humble guest houses to augment the tourist sector.

The national sector can take care of such matters, with as much a return as promised by the tourism of Europe. This will allow the national sector to have a significant portion of the kilometer.