

# Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy: A Study Centered on Mattugama DSD

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**Abstract:-** Tourism plays a significant role in the advancement of a nation or area. It contributes to a country's growth through job creation, development of attractions, dining options, entertainment, enhanced community services, economic diversification, and cultural exchange. The tourism sector also significantly influences regional advancement in Mattugama. The study area possesses considerable potential for tourism growth. This paper includes an introduction, objectives, a review of previous research, methodology, an assessment of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, and suggestions for fostering sustainable tourism in Mattugama DSD. Data was gathered through observations, interviews, and literature reviews. Data analysis utilized descriptive qualitative methods. Ultimately, this research aims to highlight that understanding the region's potential and constraints can greatly inform tourism development planning. The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats were evaluated through SWOT analysis. Consequently, suitable strategies must be developed to leverage the strengths and opportunities while addressing the weaknesses and threats to enhance tourism in Mattugama DSD. Findings indicate that Mattugama DSD has strong potential for transformation into areas for nature-based tourism, cultural tourism, adventure tourism, and community-based tourism, supported by various strengths and opportunities, while also working to reduce weaknesses and threats.

**Keywords:-** Swot Analysis, Sustainable, Tourism Development, Mattugama Region.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism plays a crucial role in the development of a nation or region. It is widely believed that the tourism industry enhances Regional Original Revenues in areas rich in natural resources while also contributing to the overall economic growth of a country (Tambunan, 2020). As one of the largest industries globally, tourism serves as a significant source of foreign exchange for countries. It aids in national development through job creation, establishment of attractions and restaurants, provision of entertainment, enhancement of community services, diversification of the economy, and fostering cross-cultural interactions. In essence, tourism is a worldwide industry that engages hundreds of millions of individuals in both international and domestic travel annually. Various economic, political, and

cultural forces influence tourism. At both local and global levels, discussions surrounding sustainability and sustainable development have been debated in public forums, including education, legal frameworks, policy formulation, and socio-economic negotiations, reflecting diverse perspectives and interests from numerous groups and communities (Painter-Morland et al., 2016).

Sustainable tourism is of utmost importance in contemporary discourse. The idea of sustainable development encompasses the need to balance environmental preservation with creating more employment opportunities and enhancing livelihoods. Sustainable tourism involves visiting a location with the intent of making a positive contribution to the local environment, society, and economy, with tourism development needing to adhere to sustainability principles (Farzaneh and Hosseini, 2021). Within academic circles focused on tourism, the concept of sustainable development has been interpreted in various ways. Additionally, tourism positively influences regional economic progress, boosts individual incomes, opens up business prospects, enhances asset values (like land prices), and generates community employment opportunities (Tambunan, 2020). Thus, the planning and development of tourism are critical, as robust tourism strategies and policies foster sustainability within the sector (Wanhill, 1994).

In Sri Lanka, tourism ranks as the second-largest industry following textiles and apparel, providing significant revenue and employment possibilities. The country is increasingly becoming a favored destination for both international tourists and expatriates returning to visit family and friends, signifying its emergence as a vital player in the global tourism arena. As tourism remains a key economic driver, it accounted for 12.6% of Sri Lanka's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2019, and the nation holds the third-largest foreign exchange reserves. The potential of nature tourism in Sri Lanka is also emphasized, as it can generate income and job opportunities while protecting the natural environment (Nuskiya, 2022).

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The tourism is one the biggest industries in the world and is a major source of foreign exchange for any country. Tourism helps to develop a country through the generation of jobs, creation of attractions, restaurants, entertainment, better services in a community, diversification of the economy and cross-cultural diversity. In short, tourism is a global industry

involving hundreds of millions of people in international as well as domestic travel each year. Tourism is influenced by forces of economic, politics and culture. Sustainability and sustainable development related debates at local and global levels in the public sphere including education, law, policy making and political-social-economic negotiations have been argued from multiple points of view, are value-laden and represent the interests of many groups and communities (Painter-Morland et al, 2016). According to the historical sources, Sri Lanka has been identified as one of the tourist centers in the ancient times too. There are a number of very famous stories about travelers who arrived in Sri Lanka in the ancient times including Fa-hien (in 5th century), Marco Polo (in 13th century), and Ibn Batuta (in 14th century). The potential of tourism had been realized by the colonial governments too (Wanninayake, 2016).

The concept of sustainable development in international tourism planning was introduced in the 1980 (Edgell 2016). The literature on sustainable tourism in Pasargad region is very scanty. Most of the literature on sustainable tourism in the world emphasized the economic aspect of tourism. Sustainable development can only work successfully when four of its constituent elements, economic, social, cultural, and environmental components have approximately equal importance and strength and conditioning and interconnection without the domination of any part of these elements (Angelevska and Rakicevik 2012).

Numerous investigations have been conducted in the realm of SWOT analysis for the advancement of sustainable tourism, leading to the formulation of various strategies and guidelines for tourism development (Ghanbari et al. 2012). Multiple studies focusing on tourism planning have integrated SWOT within a systematic approach to indicate that traditional SWOT analysis may be insufficient. This can

be attributed to factors such as the multi-dimensional nature of tourism research, the variety of tourism services, the numerous organizations involved in tourism, and the need to consider both internal and external factors of the tourism system concurrently (Farzaneh and Seyedeh, 2021). SWOT analysis stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. Each letter in SWOT represents: S for strengths, W for weaknesses, O for opportunities, and T for threats. Since the 1990s, the application of SWOT analysis in tourism planning has gradually increased, offering a strategic foundation for evaluating comprehensive competitiveness and devising development objectives and plans for tourism destinations. This article evaluates the internal and external context of Nishan Town across four dimensions and suggests development strategies (Yan and Wang, 2021).

#### ➤ Objective

The objective of this study is to examine the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of sustainable tourism development in Mattugama region.

### III. MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY

#### A. Study Area

Mattugama is situated at a latitude of 6°40'90" - 6°57'57" North and a longitude of 80°02'51" - 80°15'40" East in the western province. Figure 1 illustrates the location details of the study area. Covering approximately 257.13 square kilometers (99.28 sq mi), Mattugama is a highly sought-after tourism destination. Its natural charm and cultural variety draw visitors. The area boasts excellent weather, with an average annual rainfall of about 333.22 mm spread throughout the year. Additionally, the region features attractive mountains with several waterfalls, forests, and socio-cultural distinctive traits, presenting opportunities for sustainable tourism.

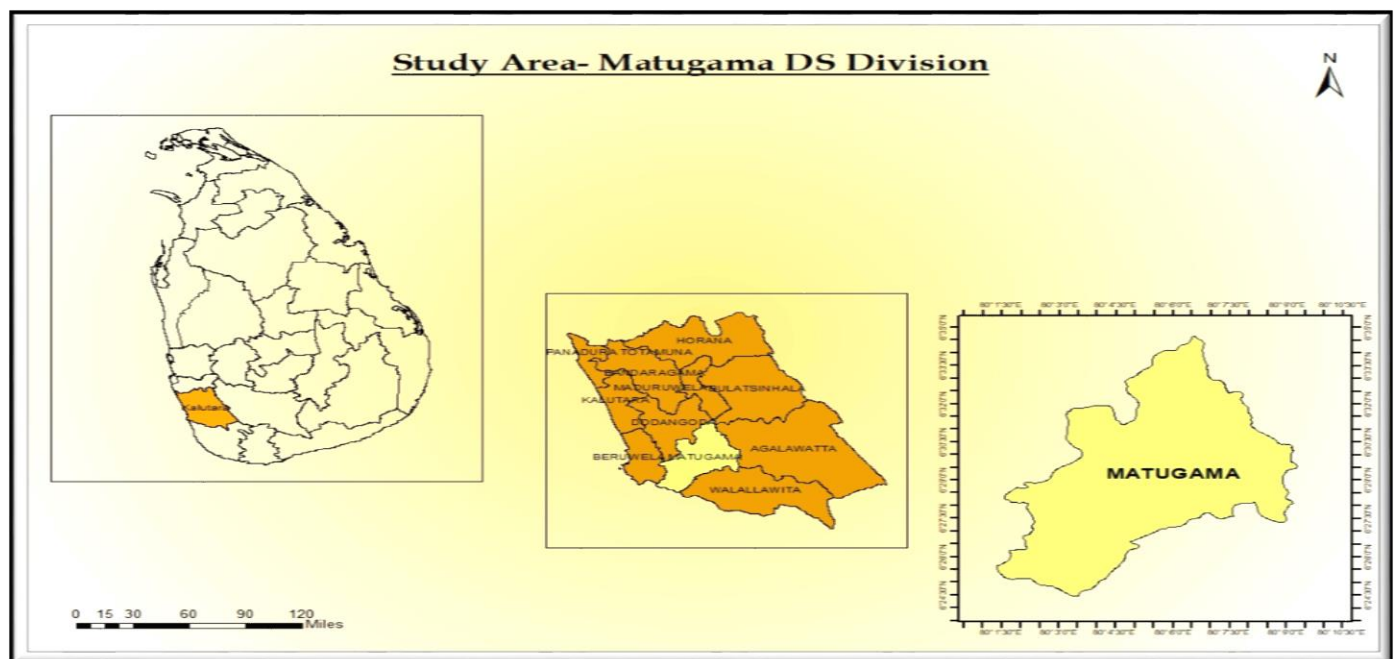


Fig 1: Location of the Study Area  
Source: Author, 2024

**B. Methods**

The approach taken in this study is the Literature Review method, which involves gathering materials, data, and information from various sources including books, journals, and articles relevant to the topics being addressed. The analysis is conducted descriptively to elucidate various aspects related to the research title.

**C. Data Collection Procedures**

In this research, data was obtained from several sources. Additionally, data were gathered through observation, interviews, and literature review.

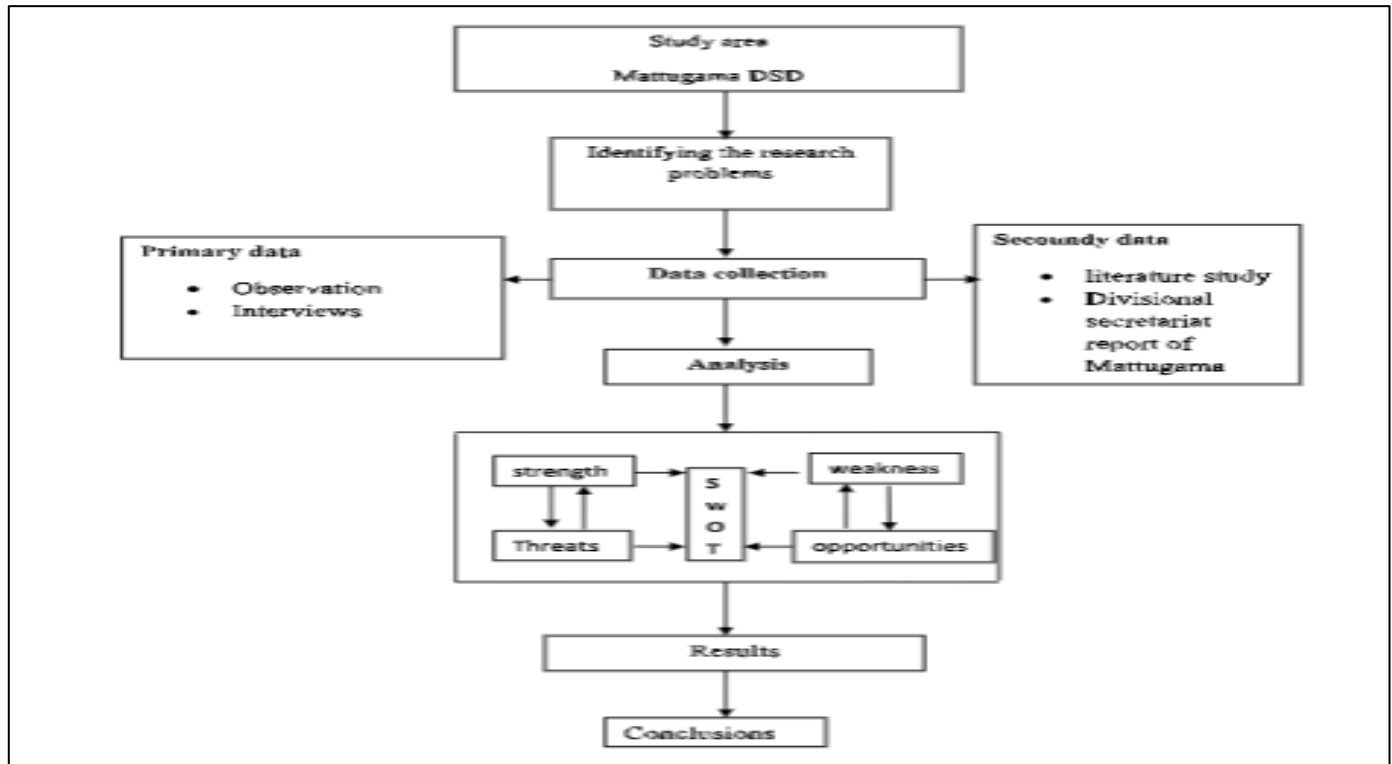
**D. Research Methodology**

Fig 2: Flow Chart of Research Methodology

**E. Data Analysis**

SWOT analysis serves as a crucial tool for decision-making support and is frequently employed to systematically evaluate strategic situations, helping to identify the organization's standing based on internal and external environments (Gao and Peng, 2011). SWOT can be categorized into two segments: the initial segment, SW, focuses on assessing internal conditions, while the latter segment, OT, concentrates on examining external conditions. Utilizing this approach enables us to pinpoint advantageous factors worth enhancing from the development status of tourism and to steer clear of unfavorable elements.

Weight for positive factors	
Strength & Oppotunities	
Very weak	1
Weak	2
Very strong	3
Strong	4
Weight for negative factors	
Weakness & Threats	
Very weak	4
Weak	3
Very strong	2
Strong	1

#### IV. RESULTS

##### ➤ Strengths (S1 – S6)

- **Rich Cultural Heritage:** Mattugama boasts a rich cultural heritage, including historical sites, temples, and traditional crafts. This cultural richness can attract heritage and cultural tourism.
- **Natural Beauty:** The surrounding natural beauty, such as lakes, waterfall, mountains, rivers, and greenery, can appeal to nature enthusiasts and eco-tourists.
- **Proximity to Colombo :** Being relatively close to capital city of Sri Lanka.
- **Potential for Agro -Tourism:** The region's agricultural activities, including paddy fields and fruit orchards, offer opportunities for agri-tourism experiences.
- **Tea Plantations:** The presence of tea plantations can attract tourists interested in learning about the tea-making process.
- **Transportation:** Matugama easily accessible from major tourist areas.(Southern Highway)

##### ➤ Weaknesses (W1 – W6)

- **Lack of Brand Awareness:** Mattugama is not as well-known as other tourist destinations in Sri Lanka, limiting its visibility to potential visitors.
- **Limited Infrastructure:** The area may lack adequate infrastructure, such as quality accommodation, transportation options, and well-maintained tourist facilities.
- **Seasonal Variations:** Tourism in Mattugama may be affected by seasonal variations in weather, which could impact visitor numbers.
- **Limited Awareness:** Many people may not be aware of Mattugama's potential as a tourist destination.
- **Limited expertise:** Limited understanding of international tourism trend and best practices.
- **Lack of community involvement:** Insufficient involvement of local communities in tourism industry, such as tour guides, hospitality staff and event organizers.

##### ➤ Opportunities (O1 –O6)

- **Adventure Tourism:** The region's natural features, such as mountains and rivers, offer opportunities for adventure activities like hiking, trekking.
- **Community-Based Tourism:** Engaging local communities in tourism activities can create authentic experiences and generate income for the local population.
- **Partnership with Nearby Destinations:** Collaborating with nearby destinations can create joint tourism packages and attract a larger number of tourists.
- **Cultural Tourism:** Organizing cultural festival and workshop can showcase the local culture and attract tourists.
- **Agro-tourism:** Leveraging the agricultural heritage, such as tea plantation and organic farm can create unique tourism experiences.
- **Ecotourism:** Promoting eco –friendly practices and sustainable tourism can attract environmentally conscious travelers.

##### ➤ Threats (T1 –T6)

- **Competition from Other Destinations:** Mattugama faces competition from other popular tourist destinations in Sri Lanka.
- **Economic Downturns:** Economic downturns can impact travel and tourism, reducing the number of visitors.
- **Environmental Challenges:** Environmental issues like pollution can negatively impact the natural beauty of the region.
- **Political Instability:** Political instability can deter tourists from visiting the area.
- **Climate change**
- **Natural Disasters:** Flood and land slide

According to analyzed the current status and identified the actual potential of this region, SWOT analysis, has been used in the proper investigation and rational assessment of available capacities. The internal and external factors of the region are presented in list out above, according to the studies carried out.

This stage aims to evaluate the internal environment of the Mattugama DSD for the identification of the strengths, weaknesses, and look for the effects of the external environment to recognizing opportunities and threats.

Table 1: Internal Environment (Weight)

Weight	Rating	Weighted Rate	
S1	0.09866	4	0.39464
S2	0.09011	4	0.36044
S3	0.08925	3	0.26775
S4	0.08469	3	0.25407
S5	0.08015	3	0.24045
S6	0.07935	3	0.23805
			1.75540
W1	0.08963	1	0.08963
W2	0.08856	1	0.08856

<b>W3</b>	0.07964	1	0.07964
<b>W4</b>	0.08256	1	0.08256
<b>W5</b>	0.07803	1	0.07803
<b>W6</b>	0.05937	2	0.11874
			0.53716

Total (SW) 1.21824

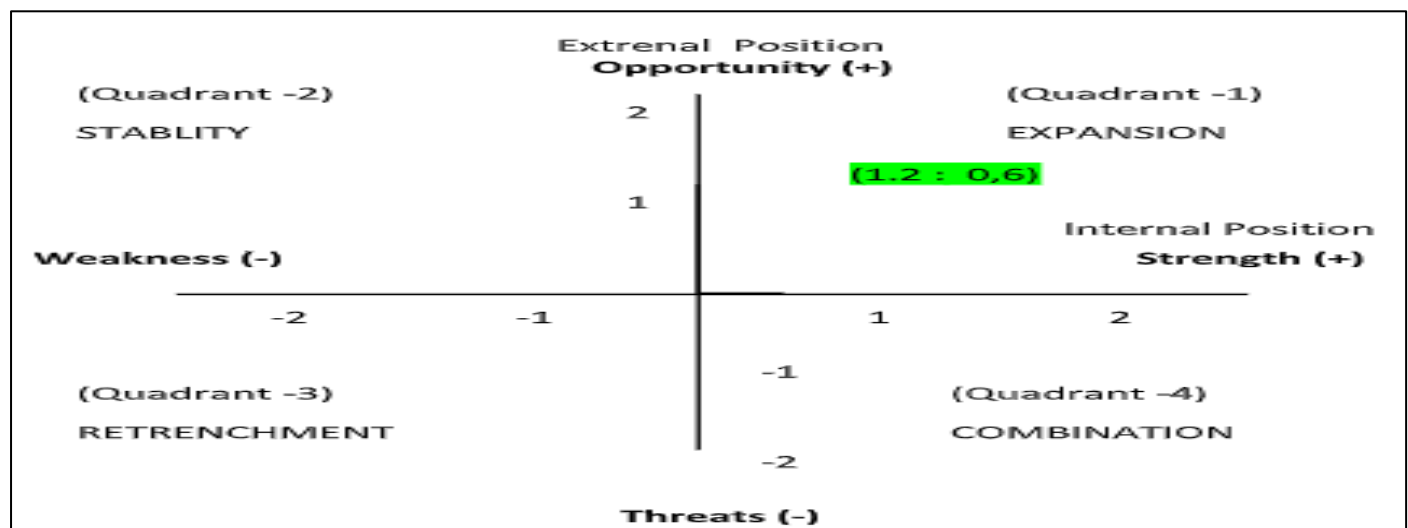
Table 2: External Environment (Weight)

Weight	Rating	Weighted Rate	
<b>O1</b>	0.09154	4	0.36616
<b>O2</b>	0.09053	3	0.27159
<b>O3</b>	0.08185	3	0.24555
<b>O4</b>	0.08083	3	0.24249
<b>O5</b>	0.08099	3	0.24297
<b>O6</b>	0.07990	3	0.23970
			1.60846
<b>T1</b>	0.08951	3	0.26853
<b>T2</b>	0.08855	1	0.08855
<b>T3</b>	0.07964	3	0.23892
<b>T4</b>	0.08250	1	0.08250
<b>T5</b>	0.07803	2	0.15606
<b>T6</b>	0.07618	2	0.15236
			0.98692

Total (OT) 0.62154

Generally, the advantages for the development of sustainable tourism are quantitatively superior to the limitations. The analysis shows that with coherent and targeted planning and with a focus on strengths and taking

advantage of existing opportunities to remove weaknesses and avoidance of threats, an effective step can be taken to turn the region into a sustainable tourist destination.



Graph 1: EFAS for sustainable tourism in Mattugama DSD

According to the graph above, the analysis of the weight and rating of each component in the SWOT Matrix indicates that the tourism site of Mattugama DSD falls within Quadrant 1, which represents the Offensive Strategy Quadrant (Expansion) positioned at coordinates (1.2; 0.6). This positioning signifies that the Mattugama DSD tourism site is thriving under 'Strong Internal and External Conditions,' suggesting that there is a favorable opportunity for its development into a natural tourism hub, cultural tourism,

adventure tourism, and community-based tourism, which is supported by various elements of strengths and opportunities, and strives to minimize weaknesses and threats. By carefully considering these strengths and opportunities, Mattugama can develop a comprehensive and sustainable tourism promotion strategy that capitalizes on its strengths, addresses its weaknesses, seizes opportunities, and mitigates potential threats.



## V. CONCLUSIONS

Encourage hotels and guesthouses to adopt sustainable practices like water conservation, waste reduction, and renewable energy use and promote responsible tourism practices like minimizing waste, conserving water, and respecting local customs and traditions. More ever, support conservation efforts for local ecosystems and biodiversity, such as protecting wetlands and planting native trees.

Encourage the use of public transportation, walking, and cycling to reduce carbon emissions and implement effective waste management systems, including recycling and composting programs.

Involve local communities in tourism planning and decision-making processes and support local businesses and artisans by promoting fair trade practices. Also promote cultural heritage and traditions through cultural events, workshops, and local artisans.

Educate tourists and locals about sustainable tourism practices and the importance of preserving the environment and culture.

Promote diverse tourism activities like cultural experiences, adventure tourism, and agritourism to attract a wider range of visitors.

Develop long-term sustainable tourism plans that prioritize environmental and social impacts. Work with local government, businesses, and communities to create a sustainable tourism ecosystem. More ever, Regularly monitor the impact of tourism on the environment and society and make necessary adjustments.

By implementing these strategies, Mattugama can become a model for sustainable tourism in Sri Lanka, attracting responsible travelers and contributing to the well-being of the local community and environment.

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