

**Managing Protected Area Tourism  
for Sustainable Community Development:  
The Case of Ruhuna National Park (Yala), Sri Lanka**

Dinesha Rasanjali Senarathna

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Primary Supervisor: Dr Carolyn Deuchar  
Secondary Supervisor: Professor Mark Orams

*People travel to National Parks and protected land and seascapes to see thriving wildlife populations, healthy ecosystems and to marvel at the unique indigenous cultures and traditions as part of nature. Travel and tourism can and should contribute significantly to local economies and local conservation efforts while ensuring positive outcomes for nature.*

*(Madhu Rao, Chair,  
IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas, 2022)*

## **Abstract**

Since demarcating the world's first protected area 150 years ago, many countries are increasingly leveraging their rich natural environments as valuable assets to promote tourism and strengthen community development. The existing literature on community development in Protected Area (PA) tourism has predominantly focused on African countries, while the South Asian context, particularly in Sri Lanka, is limited, with a lack of evidence-based research on community perceptions of PA tourism impacts. This doctoral research addresses this gap by conducting a case study on Ruhuna NP (Yala), Sri Lanka, and the proximate community of Ranakeliya to provide empirical evidence of the complex issues surrounding PA tourism growth.

In PA tourism, few studies have explored the local community's internal dialogue concerning power dynamics in resource consumption and benefit sharing amongst stakeholders, and there is also limited knowledge about the community's response to park conservation initiatives. This research adopts the Community Capital Framework (CCF), stakeholder theory, and political ecology approaches to explain the impacts of PA tourism on a local community.

This doctoral research aims to gain a deeper understanding of how PA-focused tourism can be managed to generate sustainable development for communities and, in turn, enhance the willingness of communities to embrace conservation efforts and support PA's broader environmental goals. The research makes distinctive contributions to the current literature on PA tourism, community development and conservation. The research achieves three objectives: 1) to explore and explain the relationships between key stakeholder groups engaged in PA tourism practices, and 2) to understand the community-level impacts of PA-based tourism using a case study approach, and 3) to make theoretical and methodological contributions at the intersection of PA tourism, sustainable community development and conservation. A mixed methods approach was adopted to obtain evidence from the case study on PA tourism issues outlined above. Participatory observation, surveys, semi-structured interviews, and participatory mapping exercises have addressed the research's key objectives. Descriptive statistical approaches, and thematic and spatial analysis were applied for data analysis.

The findings show that the locals are experts in defining their problems and finding potential solutions, drawing on their local, traditional, and spatial knowledge. Despite certain context-

specific drawbacks inherent in Yala PA tourism (due to power dynamics between stakeholders), that disadvantage the local community and hinder conservation efforts, this doctoral research concludes that several opportunities still exist. The local community's intention to contribute to conservation is unexpectedly high. The prospects can be harnessed by managing PA tourism to create sustainable community benefits (through integrating local culture and livelihoods), thereby enhancing the local community's commitment to achieving Yala's conservation goals. The community women's leadership in participatory conservation practices instils conservation passion in their children, emphasising the necessity of connecting these practices to PA tourism and educating the young generation about Yala's value for long-term sustainability.

The thesis offers practical insights for evidence-based tourism strategies in PA conservation policies and sustainable community benefits applicable to Sri Lanka, and also to other developing countries. The research yields a valuable community-created mapping tool for Yala park management, local authorities, and PA tourism practitioners, and identifies areas (based on impacts) to develop indicators of successful sustainable community development achieved through Yala PA tourism.



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## List of Abbreviations

CBT	community-based tourism
CC	community capital(s)
CCF	Community Capital Framework
DSD	Divisional Secretariat Division
DWC	Department of Wildlife Conservation
FD	Forest Department
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
GPS	Geographical Positioning System
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
MWFC	Ministry of Wildlife and Forest Conservation
NP	national park
PA	protected area
PAGIS	Participatory Approach Geographical Information System
PRA	participatory rural appraisal
RC	regional council
RDA	Road Development Authority
SDGs	(United Nations') Sustainable Development Goals
SLTDA	Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority
UDA	Urban Development Authority
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
UoK	University of Kelaniya
VO	village officer

VOD	Village Officer's Division
WCPA	World Commission on Protected Areas
WTTC	World Travel & Tourism Council
YJS	Yala Jeep Society
YWC	Yala Wildlife Committee
YWO	Yala Wildlife Office

## **Attestation of Authorship**

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

**Dinesha Rasanjali Senarathna**

## **Dedication**

- To the resilient mothers who never give up their academic dreams
- To husbands like Uvindu who committedly back their wives' dreams,  
turning them into reality
- To mischievous kids like Dishen who fill their mothers' lives with boundless joy.



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## **Ethics Approval**

Because this research involved human participants, ethical approval was required from the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC). Approval was received on 18 July 2019: Approval number 19/159.

# Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

*“The link between protected areas and tourism is as old as the history of PAs. PAs need tourism, and tourism needs PAs. By working with a broad range of stakeholders, notably the industry and local communities, they can do much to ensure that tourism works for their parks and the people living in it or nearby.”*

(World Commission on Protected Areas, 2022, p. xv)

Tourism plays a significant role in bringing people to specific destinations to enjoy encounters with new environments and cultures, while generating substantial economic benefits for host countries (Rosalina et al., 2021). The unprecedented growth of international tourist arrivals in 2019 and its contribution to job creation highlights the importance of the tourism industry for the world economy (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2020). However, the COVID-19 pandemic, geopolitical changes, social tensions, and economic crises posed significant challenges to the global tourism industry. Despite these adversities, the sector has shown resilience and marked a promising recovery in recent years (UNWTO, 2023c).

In today’s world, tourism has gained recognition as a vital tool for fostering sustainable development across economic, sociocultural, and environmental dimensions (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2023a). Countries such as New Zealand and Sri Lanka have placed sustainable tourism at the core of their national economic strategies, exemplifying the growing importance of this concept (SLTDA, 2023; Tourism New Zealand, 2022). Sustainable tourism is defined as “tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities” (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2016). The effective management and preservation of the natural environment are seen as critical components of sustainable tourism.

In 2022, as the tourism industry focused on recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, World Tourism Day centred on the theme of ‘rethinking tourism from crisis to transformation’ (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2023d). This theme underscored the need to restore trust in travel and promote the ethical and safe practices of the industry. Furthermore, it highlighted the importance of prioritising the well-being of people involved in tourism, supporting job creation and skill development.

Active engagement of the local community is crucial for ensuring the sustainability of tourism (Nagarjuna, 2015). The involvement of the local community adds authenticity and a sense of place to tourists' experiences, encompassing local culture, traditions and ways of life. By engaging the local community, tourism can become a more inclusive and mutually beneficial endeavour, fostering economic growth, cultural preservation and environmental stewardship. Protected area (PA) tourism has been acknowledged as a recognised strategy to attain sustainable development encompassing economic, sociocultural, and environmental pillars, underpinned by the active involvement and support of the local community (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2022).

PA tourism primarily takes place in natural settings such as national parks, nature reserves and wildlife sanctuaries, which hold significant value in conserving natural resources and biodiversity (National Park Service, 2023). Protecting these limited PAs on the planet is crucial in addressing climate change issues (International Union for Conservation of Nature, 2023b), particularly for vulnerable and economically disadvantaged countries (United Nations Environment Programme, 2022). Harnessing PA tourism allows these countries to simultaneously achieve conservation and economic goals (Naidoo et al., 2019). However, the management of PA tourism must ensure sustainable community development, as negative impacts and exploitation of biodiversity can harm local communities without providing adequate economic returns (Islam et al., 2018; Pham, 2020).

This research investigates the management of PA tourism to achieve sustainable community development and conservation goals. The study focuses on the developing nation of Sri Lanka and examines the participation of stakeholders in PA tourism and its impacts on the local community. This chapter commences with the rationale and significance of the research, then outlines the research objectives and key questions, and finishes with the structure of the thesis at the end of the chapter.

## **1.1 Rationale and significance of the study**

Several actors, such as global organisations, governments, Indigenous communities, and individual environmental actors, stress the value of protecting flora and fauna for future generations (International Union for Conservation of Nature, 2023a; The National Wildlife Federation, 2023; United Nations Environment Programme, 2011). The value of the natural environment is not limited to the financial or instrumental perspective of the environment as a resource; instead, it is a moral imperative that the natural environment

should be viewed through a lens of holistic, relational values (PNAS, 2016). Environmental activist Jane Goodall emphasises the importance of biodiversity as an engine of the planet:

All those species work together and help our planet breathe and grow.  
But when one thread of the tapestry is pulled out, the whole thing starts  
to unravel. (Jane Goodall Institute of Canada, 2022)

In today's world, ecosystems and biodiversity are depleting at an alarming rate (Gora et al., 2023; Sobha et al., 2023). For example, two-thirds of the wildlife population on earth (including both terrestrial and marine) has disappeared in the past 50 years (Rott, 2020). The planet loses an area of forest equivalent to the size of one football field per second due to deforestation (The World Counts, n.d.).

The limited education and poverty found in marginalised communities have been identified as major threats to achieving conservation as these communities often live close to and their activities are usually highly dependent on natural environments such as beaches and reservations (Adams & Hutton, 2007; Duffy, 2014). PA creation is increasingly linked to local economic development and central to government policies to alleviate poverty. Linking local people's livelihoods with PA tourism is the key to gaining their support and involvement in conservation activities, as the potential economic gain to their communities is a motivational factor (Soliman, 2015; L. S. Stone et al., 2022).

PA tourism has been identified as a strategy to connect sustainable economic development and PA conservation in a 'win-win' situation for the environment and local communities (Adams & Hutton, 2007; Wall & Mathieson, 2006). Many countries – both developed and developing – are turning to their rich natural environments, often in the form of PA (including national parks [NPs]), as assets to market and promote tourism as a tool for community development and to breathe new life into struggling local economies (Dinica, 2016; Mowforth & Munt, 2016). However, PA tourism activities worldwide encounter the challenges of biodiversity conservation (such as destruction of habitats, climate change and exploitation of species) and tourism sustainability (e.g., overcrowding, unequal benefit sharing and commodification of local culture). Challenges to achieving sustainable tourism include visitors' lack of awareness about the natural environment, the profit-maximisation orientation of private operators, and over-tourism. Another challenge is the limited range of technological tools available to monitor

biodiversity and tourism activities in PAs, for example, tools like remote sensing and Geographical Information Systems (GIS) to monitor visitor movements in the park.

The benefits of PA tourism are mainly measured by financial indicators such as revenue, occupancy rate and contribution to the national gross domestic product (GDP). There is less focus on understanding the value of PA tourism using sociocultural and environmental measures (Jurkus et al., 2022). Furthermore, perceptions of economic benefits are primarily collected from managerial or governmental stakeholders, and there is a lack of studies exploring PA tourism's impacts on local communities. Unequal stakeholder representation and unequal benefit sharing create crucial issues with balancing tourism and conservation in PAs (Birendra, 2021).

The impact of the recent global COVID-19 pandemic on tourism in PAs has been varied in different parts of the sector (Jurkus et al., 2022). The post-COVID recovery challenges are embedded with harnessing the benefits of tourism while reducing the adverse impacts of the pandemic (e.g., lack of investments, and reduction of both revenue and travelling demand) on PAs (Birendra, 2021). Creating resilience to shocks like a world pandemic demands robust and multifaceted frameworks to gear PA tourism towards sustainability (M. T. Stone et al., 2022).

At the height of the pandemic (between 2020 and 2022) some PAs experienced a reversal of biodiversity losses due to deforestation. Others faced an increase in anthropological threats like hunting or wildlife trading (Maraseni et al., 2022; Rodrigo, 2020a). These illegal activities are mostly attributed to individuals suffering a loss of income due to declining PA tourism (Rodrigo, 2020b). Diseases such as COVID-19 that originate from wild animals excluded from their natural environment emphasises the urgent need to protect biodiversity in PAs (Smith, 2022).

In 2022, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) highlighted the value of PA tourism as a vehicle to drive a sustainable tourism model through the 'One Health' principle. The One Health principle in PAs concerns balancing the health and well-being of humans, animals and the environment by engaging in prevention, detection, response and recovery guidelines for disease risk in and around the PAs for sustainable tourism.

Protected and conserved areas are an especially important setting for sustainable tourism and can serve as a catalyst for wider adoption of best practices anchored in 'One Health' principles that help to sustainably balance the health of people, animals, and ecosystems. (International Union for Conservation of Nature, 2022, p. 1)

To be successful in applying the One Health principle in PA tourism, commitment from every stakeholder group is essential. Also in 2022, the United Nations' Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD) 15th Conference of the Parties (COP 15) held in Montréal focused on halting biodiversity loss around the world by aiming to protect 30% of the Earth's lands, oceans, coastal areas, and inland waters by 2030 (Convention on Biological Diversity, 2022). As the world's largest single industry, tourism represents one of the global economy's leading sectors. With the development of modern transportation systems, the tourism industry has dramatically expanded over the 20th and 21st centuries and so has been a key contributor to biodiversity losses and climate change issues caused by increasing carbon emissions.

While acknowledging the adverse effects of tourism on natural areas and the climate, COP 15 also views the tourism industry as potentially part of the solution for nature (Convention on Biological Diversity, 2022). The United Nations' CBD has developed a guideline on biodiversity and tourism development to minimise tourism's negative social and environmental impacts on parks and the local community while maximising its positive benefits (Convention on Biological Diversity, 2022). This guideline provides information for PA authorities, emphasising the importance of sharing responsibilities among all stakeholders at local, regional, and national levels. Out of the 34 key decisions made by COP 15, Decision 10 preferably prioritises the Indigenous people and local communities. Decision 10 aims to develop a new programme to access traditional knowledge of nature and conservation to develop and implement biodiversity policies. Decision 10 also targets the linking of biological and cultural diversity with the effective participation of girls and women in Indigenous or local communities.

PA tourism offers opportunities for tourism to conserve biodiversity while enhancing the benefits to the local community as a sustainable tourism approach (Gupta et al., 2023). This approach applies to nature- and biodiversity-rich countries like Sri Lanka, to optimise development opportunities and counter the effects of various political, economic and disaster challenges.

### **1.1.1 Sri Lanka and the role of tourism**

Sri Lanka is an island of 65,610 km<sup>2</sup>, located in the Indian Ocean. The current population of Sri Lanka is 22 million, with a multi-ethnic composition of 75% Sinhalese, 15% Tamil, 9% Moor, and 1% other (Department of Census and Statistics Sri Lanka, 2023). Sri Lanka's strategic position on the sea route between Europe and the Far East was



advantageous in building international relationships such as trade and tourism. Sri Lanka's location on the important trade route also led to colonisation over 443 years under three European powers: Portuguese, Dutch and British; the country was granted independence from Britain in 1948 (Sagar et al., 2021).

A few decades after independence, the country suffered from nearly a 30-year civil conflict, between 1983 and 2009. From 2009 the country remained politically stable for 10 years, until it suffered a series of terrorist attacks in multiple places around Colombo starting on Easter Sunday. As well as political instability, the country's economic growth has also been continuously challenged by incidents like the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami and the 2019 Easter Sunday terrorist attacks.

During 2020 and 2021, like countries all around the world, Sri Lanka struggled with the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in a post-pandemic economic crisis in 2022. The mass protests nationwide against the government have created an unstable political situation. Until 2022, Sri Lanka was considered a lower middle-income country, but it has been recently downgraded to a lower-income country (The World Bank, n.d.). 2018 recorded the highest GDP of USD95 billion, with 2.3% annual growth before all the unexpected events (e.g., the terrorist attack, pandemic, and the economic crisis) occurred.

In contrast, Sri Lanka's score in the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Human Development Index (HDI) was 0.782, and it was categorised as a 'high development' country (United Nations Development Programme, 2023b). Its ranking, of 73 (out of 154), was an improvement of three places, despite the political and economic uncertainties the country has faced since 2019. The Sri Lankan Government's provision of free education and healthcare facilities to its citizens contributes significantly to the country attaining a high level of human development. But even though Sri Lankan human development is unusually successful compared with other South Asian countries', economic growth needs to be accelerated to uplift the country's current development status.

Sri Lanka's poverty headcount index was 3% in 2019, with 689,800 individuals living below the poverty line that year (Department of Census and Statistics Sri Lanka, 2023). In 2021, there were 439,783 registered unemployed; the unemployment rate for females (8%) was twice as high as for males (4%) (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2022). The labour force participation rate in 2021 stood at 50%, with half of the participants engaged in the

services sector, while the remaining half was equally distributed between the agriculture and industrial sectors (Department of Census and Statistics Sri Lanka, 2023). The sectoral composition of the GDP in 2021 revealed that services accounted for 57%, industries for 28%, agriculture for 9% and taxes for 6% (Department of Census and Statistics Sri Lanka, 2023).

In 1966, the Sri Lankan Government embarked on its initial endeavour to establish a systematic framework for tourism development within the country. This endeavour involved establishing two institutions: the Ceylon Tourist Board and the Ceylon Hotel Corporation. These institutes were assigned several key responsibilities, including documenting tourist statistics, conducting research activities, providing training programmes for the workforce, and ultimately facilitating the enhancement of the tourism industry. The Ceylon Tourist Board has been rebranded as the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA, 2023), while the Ceylon Hotel Corporation retains its original designation (Ceylon Hotels Corporation, 2023).

Based on the annual tourism statistical reports provided by the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA), there were 18,969 international visitor arrivals in 1966, generating an income of USD1.3 million. Subsequently, within a span of four years, tourist arrivals increased twofold, resulting in a substantial rise in income to USD10.5 million. The average duration of stay during this period was reported to be 10.5 nights, and the tourism industry contributed to creating 5000 direct and 7000 indirect employment opportunities.

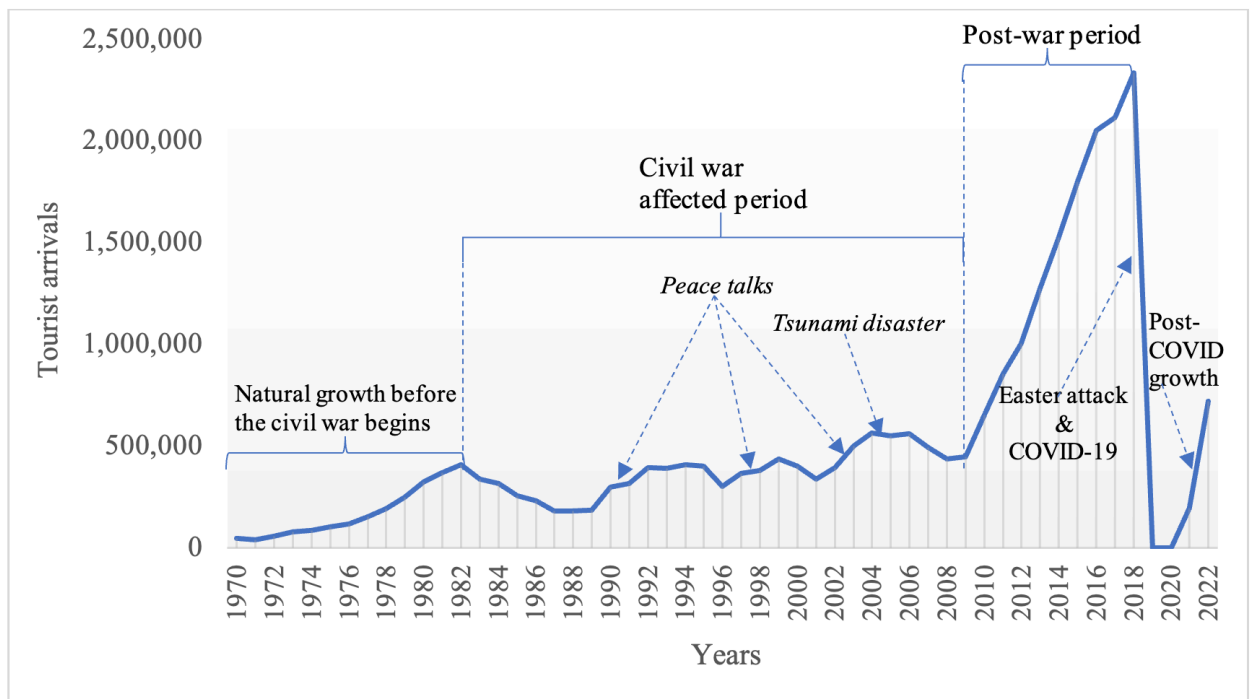
Tourism continued to flourish until it came to an abrupt halt in 1982. This downturn was primarily attributed to the emergence of the first terrorist activity, by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in 1983. The tourism industry recorded a decline, with tourist arrivals amounting to 407,230 and an income of USD147 million in 1983. Prior to the decline, the tourism industry had been instrumental in generating employment opportunities, providing approximately 30,000 direct and 40,000 indirect jobs (SLTDA, 2002).

During the civil war, which ran from 1983 to 2009, Sri Lanka's annual tourist numbers remained relatively consistent at approximately 450,000 visitors (see Figure 1.1). However, slight fluctuations in tourist arrivals were observed during the peace talks conducted within this time frame (SLTDA, 2017). The devastating Boxing Day tsunami

in December 2004 led to a slight decline in tourist numbers in 2005. Following the war's conclusion in 2009, the country experienced a significant rebound in tourist arrivals, with a remarkable growth rate of 40% recorded in the first year after the end of the war (SLTDA, 2017). By 2017, total international tourist arrivals had reached 2,116,407, with an average stay of 10.9 nights. These arrivals contributed approximately USD4 billion in foreign exchange to the Sri Lankan economy. In 2018, the highest sources of foreign revenue for the country were foreign remittances (26%), textile and garments (19%), and tourism (16%).

The year 2018 marked a significant milestone for Sri Lanka, as it witnessed the highest-ever number of international tourist arrivals – a staggering figure of 2,333,796. This influx of tourists resulted in the country's substantial income of USD4.4 billion. The average duration of stay for these tourists was reported to be 10.8 nights, with the graded accommodation sector achieving an impressive room occupancy rate of 73% (SLTDA, 2017). This remarkable performance propelled tourism to the second position of all sectors generating foreign exchange for Sri Lanka, a position which had been held by the textile and garment industry for the preceding eight years (Xinhua, 2018). Recognising the immense potential of the tourism industry, the Sri Lankan Government has identified it as a key industry for driving economic development (Ministry of Economic Development, 2010). The substantial growth in tourist arrivals poses a pertinent question regarding the approach to tourism development in the country: Should the focus be on quantity or quality? This inquiry pertains to the balance between attracting a large volume of tourists and ensuring that the tourism experience meets high standards and delivers sustainable benefits.

**Figure 1.1 Number of tourist arrivals in Sri Lanka 1970–2022**



Source: SLTDA (2023).

In 2018, the tourism industry in Sri Lanka played a significant role in generating both direct and indirect employment opportunities, with the SLTDA reporting that the sector created 169,003 direct jobs and 219,484 indirect jobs (SLTDA, 2018). That year tourism contributed 6% to GDP in the country.

Since the commencement of 2019, the tourism industry in Sri Lanka has faced considerable disruptions due to socioeconomic and political challenges. In April of that year, during the Easter holiday, a series of devastating terrorist attacks occurred in several Catholic churches and three luxury hotels in the vicinity of Colombo. Consequently, the tourism industry experienced an immediate suspension of activities for several months. Subsequently, the global COVID-19 pandemic emerged towards the end of 2019, further exacerbating the downturn of the industry. The combined effect of these two factors resulted in a notable decline in the number of tourist arrivals to Sri Lanka, reaching 1,913,702 in 2019. Despite the decrease, the tourism industry still contributed USD3.6 billion to foreign revenues, accounting for 4.3% of GDP. On average, tourists stayed for 10.4 nights, with graded accommodations recording a room occupancy rate of 57%. It is worth noting that, despite these challenges, the tourism industry in Sri Lanka maintained its position as the third-largest earner of foreign exchange, contributing 14% to the country's overall foreign-exchange earnings in 2019 (SLTDA, 2019).

Throughout 2020, the Sri Lankan tourism industry grappled with the enduring effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting global travel restrictions. Consequently, the number of international visitors arriving in the country was significantly limited, reaching a mere 507,704 (see Figure 1.1). The average length of time that tourists stayed also fell, from 10.4 to 8.5 nights. This decline in both arrivals and length of stay meant that the tourism industry earned just US\$ 0.7 billion in foreign revenue that year. This represented just 3.3% of all foreign revenue earned in 2020, meaning that the tourism industry dropped from third to seventh position of all industries that generated foreign revenue that year.

The year 2021 was particularly challenging for the Sri Lankan tourism industry, with the meagre 194,495 arrivals being the lowest number of international visitor arrivals in 30 years. This decline was primarily attributed to the enduring impacts of the post-COVID period. Consequently, the foreign revenue generated during this year amounted to only USD0.6 billion. By the end of 2022, the post-COVID economic crisis and the resulting political uncertainty at the national level was having a significant impact on the tourism industry. However, a slight recovery was observed in terms of both international visitor arrivals and foreign revenue, with a recorded figure of 719,978 individuals and a contribution of USD1.1 billion in foreign revenue.

Despite these uncertainties and shocks and their effects on the visitor industry, the government still trusts tourism as an important pillar of the economy, as indicated in its development strategies (Ministry of Tourism Development, 2017; J. Mitchell, 2022). The World Bank and Australian Aid supported Sri Lanka in preparing a post-COVID strategic plan to recover the tourism industry. Its mission statement declares:

To be a high-value destination offering extraordinary experiences that reflect Sri Lanka's natural and cultural heritage, are socially inclusive and environmentally responsible, and provide economic benefits to communities and the country. (J. Mitchell, 2022, p. 17)

The *Strategic Plan for Sri Lanka Tourism 2022–2025* aims to follow a “sustainable and resilient tourism development model” by encouraging the private sector and supporting female economic empowerment to distribute the benefits across the island. Two key objectives to achieve this aim are to create a “people-centric economic development” through community-based tourism practices and “sustainable environmental management” (J. Mitchell, 2022, p. 12).

### **1.1.2 Tourism development and protected areas in Sri Lanka**

Sri Lanka's natural resources, including PAs, have a significant value for sustainable tourism development that engages communities in rural areas. Since 2010, the Government has promoted Sri Lanka's global image as a "Natural Wonder" in strategic tourism plans (Ministry of Economic Development, 2010; Ministry of Tourism Development, 2017). This promotion led to a dramatic growth in the numbers of international tourist visiting national parks (NPs) in Sri Lanka between 2009 (the end of the civil war) and 2019. In 2009, 70,688 international tourists visited NPs. The numbers doubled again the next year, and by 2015 – just six years later – international tourist arrivals had grown tenfold. This rapid increase had made visiting a NP a must-do activity for one out of three tourists to Sri Lanka by 2016 (SLTDA, 2020).

Despite the expansion of tourism in PAs within the country, relatively little research has been conducted on the specific context of Sri Lankan PA tourism. Previous research has explored management issues, visitor experiences and demand perspectives of PA tourism in Sri Lanka (Buultjens et al., 2017; Duminduhewa et al., 2020; Powell et al., 2009; Prakash et al., 2019; Senevirathna & Perera, 2013). A few studies have criticised the negative environmental impacts of tourism inside PAs, but the sociocultural and economic impacts of tourism have been largely ignored. Furthermore, the perceptions of local neighbouring communities of tourism in PAs are missing in the extant literature (Karunarathna et al., 2017; Newsome, 2013; Ranaweera et al., 2015; Sumanapala & Wolf, 2020).

In particular, there is a lack of understanding of local communities' experiences of PA tourism development and its impacts in Sri Lanka (Hettiarachchi, n.d.). There are a few studies on Yala that have focused on the tourists' or management's perspectives of PA tourism (Buultjens et al., 2017; Duminduhewa et al., 2020; Prakash et al., 2019)– but none has revealed the local community's viewpoint of PA tourism impacts and the benefits or challenges they experience.

More than a decade has passed since the civil war ended, but the poverty level of neighbouring communities and the anthropological threats to Yala (e.g., illegal deforestation, poaching) has not significantly reduced (Buultjens et al., 2017; Thissamaharama DSD, n.d.). Meanwhile, recent research shows that new conservation issues have appeared due to the rapid growth of PA tourism development in and outside Yala (Duminduhewa et al., 2020). Questions that remain unanswered include:

1. What is the role of the local community in PA tourism?
2. What benefits do the local community (who live next to PA boundaries) receive?
3. How do these benefits contribute to community development and conservation?

These questions are not limited to Yala but are relevant to all PA tourism literature in Sri Lanka. Research is needed to deepen the understanding of the links between tourism and protected areas in Sri Lanka and elsewhere, especially in the important area of community engagement and development (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2016). There is a need to examine the impacts of PA tourism on the local community and provide possible solutions to minimise the adverse effects with the support of local knowledge (Anthopoulou & Melissourgios, 2013; Snyman & Bricker, 2019).

### **Clarification of terminology**

Some terminologies utilised in this thesis initially appear quite similar, but there are distinctions, or slight differences in the practical application within the context of PA tourism in Yala, Sri Lanka.

*Yala Protected Area (Yala PA):* The designated protected area for this research's case study is called Yala PA. In cases where a reference is made to 'Yala', it indicates the whole protected area of Yala: Yala PA.

*Yala National Park (Yala NP):* This pertains to a specific segment, namely Block 1 located inside the Yala PA. This segment serves as the epicentre for the PA tourism activities. Officially this segment is declared as Ruhuna NP, the colloquial practice employs the term Yala NP (e.g., the official website title and the signage at the park's entrance reads 'Yala National Park').

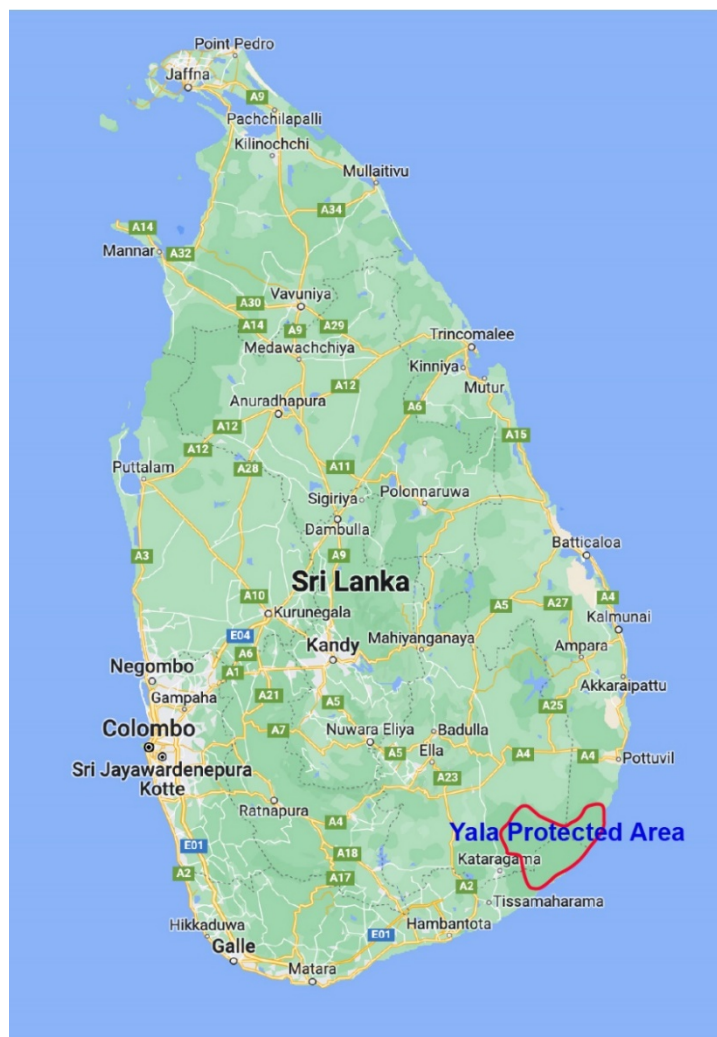
*Yala park management:* This phrase denotes the management staff of the Yala Wildlife Office (YWO) in Palatupana which is in the principal gateway to Yala. Yala park management has recognised as a pivotal stakeholder group in this research for Yala PA tourism.

*Yala Wildlife Office (YWO):* This refers the physical office premises serving as a local branch of the Department of Wildlife Conservation (DWC) of Sri Lanka for Yala. In some cases, YWO represent all the staff there including managerial or the minor staff like park rangers or wildlife trackers. Therefore, YWO is slightly different from the Yala park management.

## 1.2 The research aims and questions

This research addresses the gap in knowledge about the links between PA-focused tourism and sustainable community development in Sri Lanka. The overarching aim of the research was to gain a deeper understanding of how PA-focused tourism can be managed to generate sustainable development for communities and, in turn, enhance the willingness of communities to embrace conservation efforts and support the broader environmental goals of PAs. The research concentrates on the case of Ruhuna NP inside Yala Protected Area, Sri Lanka (see Figure 1.2). Yala PA was chosen because it is a very well-known destination for international and domestic tourists, and the management of the Park follows PA tourism practices. In this context, the research also examines the community of Ranakeliya, which is the community closest to the Palatupana main entrance of Yala PA.

**Figure 1.2 Yala Protected Area, Hambantota, Sri Lanka**



Source: Google Map Data (n.d.).



The three objectives, and related research questions that guide this work are:

1. To explore and explain the relationships between key stakeholder groups engaged in PA tourism practices.
  - i) Who are the key stakeholders connected with PA tourism, and what are their relationships?
  - ii) How does the community utilise community capital to develop PA tourism?
  - iii) How do various stakeholders access community capital to enable PA tourism?
  - iv) How does power circulate among stakeholders when handling community capital and sharing the revenue generated from tourism?
2. To understand the community-level impacts of PA tourism using a case study approach.
  - i) What types of conflict occur between PA and the local community?
  - ii) How do the local community perceive the economic and sociocultural impacts of PA tourism on their lives?
  - iii) How are the environmental impacts of PA tourism identified and felt by the community?
  - iv) Are the local community aware of the conservation goals of the PA? And in what ways are the local community willing to contribute towards achieving these goals?
3. To make theoretical and methodological contributions to the current literature focused on PA tourism, sustainable community development and conservation.
  - i) To make a significant theoretical contribution to the literature focusing on PA and tourism, and related links to sustainable community development.
  - ii) To make a methodological contribution to the literature by introducing participatory rural appraisal approaches [specifically Participatory Geographical Information System (PGIS)] into a broader attempt to apply mixed methods to understanding the chosen case.
  - iii) To suggest some future indicators that might strengthen understanding of tourism impacts and performance in areas where conservation and community development initiatives intersect.

To address these aims and related research questions, the research primarily adopted the interpretative paradigm with relativist ontology and subjectivist epistemology. The study

relies on three main bodies of theories: stakeholders' theory, community capital framework, and political ecology. These theories support understanding the practices of the key stakeholder groups in Yala PA tourism; specifically, the links between stakeholder groups, how stakeholders' approach and use the community capital in Ranakeliya, the power roles different stakeholders play when using the community capital, and how stakeholders share the benefits of Yala PA tourism. The research findings will then inform ways to manage Yala PA tourism for sustainable community development in Ranakeliya.

This study used mixed methods methodology with the case study approach. The data were collected through non-participant observations, community household surveys, semi-structured interviews, and participatory mapping exercises (PAGIS). The data analysis was based on qualitative, quantitative, and spatial methods, and software like SPSS, NVivo and ArcGIS was used, where necessary, in the data analysis process.

### **1.3 Structure of the thesis**

Chapter 2 presents a literature review, with definitions of NPs and PAs facilitating wildlife or PA tourism. The chapter then outlines the development of PA tourism and widely discusses its impacts by providing examples in developing contexts. Next, it presents the concepts of community development and a community capital framework. The stakeholder theory and political ecology, followed by PA tourism-related studies, are then reviewed. This chapter provides the broader context of the country to recognise the role of the tourism industry in Sri Lanka, and the value of NPs and PA tourism for Sri Lanka is explored. The chapter also highlights the importance of understanding the community perceptions of PA tourism impacts in Sri Lanka and reinforces the key areas of literature this thesis aims to contribute to.

Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology and methods adopted in the study and justifies the reasons for choosing the mixed methods and case study approaches that underpin the work. Then the study's design and field data collection, which comprised two data-collection phases, are explained. Next, the data analysis techniques of the study, which consist of qualitative, quantitative, and spatial methods, are described, and justified. Finally, the ethical consideration of my positionality and reflexivity are described.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of Yala PA and its surrounding areas, focusing on its natural and cultural setting. The first section of the chapter describes the physical and geographical characteristics of the Yala PA and Thissamaharama area. The second section emphasises the study area's cultural dimensions, such as history, urbanisation, population, and development factors. The final paragraph gives information about the tourism industry in Thissamaharama-Hambantota, where the Yala PA is located. Yala PA tourism and the key stakeholders are introduced by emphasising the broader issues embedded within the Park.

Chapter 5 presents the research findings of the stakeholders' links and how stakeholders engage with Ranakeliya community capital to utilise Yala PA tourism. The chapter also identifies the key stakeholders in Yala PA tourism (Park management, policymakers, private sector operators, local employees, and community members) and their roles. Relationships between the key stakeholder groups are also analysed, paying attention to the tourism services and products, financials, and information links. The chapter concludes by examining the power dynamics and power-related issues that arise when sharing the benefits among the stakeholder groups.

Chapter 6 presents the research findings: the impacts of PA tourism on the local community of Ranakeliya. This detailed study investigates the impacts on the local community from economic, sociocultural, and environmental perspectives. The first part of this chapter thus delves into the local community's willingness to support the conservation initiatives in Yala. The chapter's second part then illustrates the conflicts between stakeholder groups involved in Yala PA tourism. A particular focus is placed on conflicts between the local community and the park management of Yala. The chapter ends with examining the issues raised between the local community and other stakeholders, including outside tourism service providers and tourists visiting Yala PA.

Chapter 7 presents seven stories of Yala derived from the research findings. This chapter is structured into two primary sections. The first section examines the impediments to managing sustainable PA tourism in Yala. Within this section, three stories are presented: Political interference, Winners and losers, and Human–elephant conflict. The second section of the chapter is dedicated to exploring a strengths-based approach for inclusive community development through PA tourism. Four narratives are aligned under this section: Business makers, Women warriors, Young stewards of nature, and Cherishing local culture. This chapter provides a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and

potential opportunities for sustainable tourism management in Yala, while highlighting the significance of community-driven strategies in promoting inclusive and environmentally conscious development.

Chapter 8 synthesises the key findings and presents key conclusions from the thesis. The chapter then outlines the research's theoretical and methodological contributions to the current knowledge of sustainable PA tourism. It goes on to discuss practical implications for Ranakeliya, implications which might also be relevant for other similar communities in PAs. The study's findings can also be utilised for future planning processes and decision-making in the Yala park management and other government institutes related to wildlife conservation and tourism development in Sri Lanka, and the implications of the study's findings at the managerial and policymaking level are presented in the same section. Finally, the chapter acknowledges the limitations of the study and presents future research directions for academics who are interested in extending their knowledge in the field of PA tourism.

## Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

*“...postulated that wildlife tourism will only be sustainable where there are benefits for the host community.”*

(Buultjens et al., 2017, p. 162)

This chapter presents a review of extant literature of relevance to this thesis. The literature review is thematically organised and begins with a focus on the links between protected areas (PAs), national parks (NPs), wildlife tourism and PA tourism. A detailed discussion of the impacts of PA tourism on the local community is then provided with examples from developing contexts. The chapter goes on to reflect on the links between PA tourism, sustainable community development and conservation. The literature review investigates the local community and community development through the Community Capital Framework (CCF) lens. Stakeholder theory and an in-depth discussion of the political ecology approach are then presented, emphasising how they apply to PA tourism. The latter part of the literature review discusses the background of NPs and PA tourism in Sri Lanka. The chapter concludes by highlighting the importance of the community's perception of PA tourism impacts and notes the gaps this study addresses.

### **2.1 Protected areas (PAs), national parks (NPs) and wildlife tourism**

According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) definitions, effective protected areas are known as:

Clearly defined geographical spaces that are recognised, dedicated, and managed, either through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature, along with associated ecosystem services and cultural values. (Davis, 2008, p. 1)

A PA can be recognised in terrestrial and marine settings, and this PhD research focuses on a terrestrial one. The IUCN classifies PAs into seven categories, depending on their biological value and the social-ecological services they provide: i) strict nature reserve, ii) wilderness area, iii) national park, iv) natural monument or feature, v) habitat/species management area, vi) protected landscape/seascape, or vii) PA with sustainable use of natural resources.

A PA is a legally recognised geographical region known for its significant long-term conservation value. Within the scope of PA, one specific category is the NP, which

sometimes can be geographically smaller in comparison to a PA (e.g., a small area of a PA can be declared as a NP). NPs, while encompassing unique ecological and conservation attributes, also possess distinctive educational and recreational qualities, making them particularly well-suited for tourism purposes. A NP is defined as:

A PA managed mainly for ecosystem protection and recreation: it is a natural area of land and/or sea, designated to (a) protect the ecological integrity of one or more ecosystems for present and future generations, (b) exclude exploitation or occupation inimical to the purposes of designation of the area and (c) provide a foundation for spiritual, scientific, educational, recreational and visitor opportunities, all of which must be environmentally and culturally compatible. (International Union for Conservation of Nature, 1994, p. xv)

According to this definition, a NP has both economic and non-economic values, including tourism and biodiversity conservation. Wildlife tourism is significant because it is one of the most popular tourism activities conducted in NPs, and if managed well, it strives to achieve conservation and economic development goals simultaneously (Giongo et al., 1994; Pimbert & Pretty, 2013).

During periods of Western colonialism, PAs and NPs were established in various developing countries to regulate wildlife tourism and recreational hunting (Tessema et al., 2010). Wildlife tourism is a diverse sector, and many tours conducted in NPs or PAs include a wildlife safari. Tourists have several options to encounter non-domesticated animals, ranging from seeing captive animals in zoos and aquariums to observing wild animals in their natural habitats, such as wildlife sanctuaries. Engagement with wildlife can occur through consumptive, semi-consumptive and/or non-consumptive approaches (Tisdell & Wilson, 2012). Tourists often prefer visiting wildlife in their natural habitats to experience them in their own environments. Land mammals that tourists are particularly keen on seeing include the African elephant, lion, leopard, rhino, and buffalo; many of these sought-after species, like the rhino, are endangered. Additionally, birds and marine mammals hold appeal in wildlife tourism (Tessema et al., 2010). The wildlife tourism sector holds significant economic potential to impact developing nations:

The term 'wildlife tourism' is often assumed largely to comprise tourism that involves international travel by people from rich developed countries to wildlife areas in poorer developing countries, as a means of providing much needed foreign exchange for hard-pressed national economies, and earnings for poor rural people, as well as a reason for justifying the upkeep of wildlife in PA. (Roe et al., 1997, p. xii)

Many international tourists travel to the developing world to view landscapes, ecosystems and, in particular, wildlife and unique cultures of the local community – features that are lacking in their home countries; thus, wildlife tourism can be a powerful tool for the redistribution of economic benefits (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2015; World Travel and Tourism Council, 2022).

Across Africa, the tourism industry relies significantly on wildlife tourism, which accounts for one-third of the sector's overall income (Eagles & McCool, 2002; Lee et al., 2014). In 2018, wildlife tourism contributed USD120 billion to global GDP – five times more than the revenue generated from the illegal wildlife trade (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2019). The international impact of wildlife tourism translated into the creation of 21.8 million jobs, both directly and indirectly, in the same year, a figure comparable to the entire population of Sri Lanka. The Africa region accounted for 36.3% of global wildlife tourism, while the Asia-Pacific region contributed 5.8% (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2019).

Scholars argue that wildlife tourism can lead to negative impacts on wild animals; for example, wildlife crimes such as hunting, trafficking, and animal cruelty (Cohen, 2013; Sinha, 2001). Local poachers also threaten wildlife, given the high demand for animal specimens on the black market (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2015). These crimes result from corrupt governance, extreme poverty, failed conservation efforts and a limited legal framework that challenges national security and sustainable development (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2015). PA managers in some countries, such as South Africa, have initiated anti-poaching programmes with the support of commercial and even military approaches (ProTrack Anti-Poaching Company, 2023). However, local communities may be hesitant to support wildlife tourism due to ethical concerns regarding the balance between human and animal rights. For instance, the treatment of individuals involved in poaching raises questions about the ethical justification of resorting to violent measures to protect animal welfare (Duffy, 2014; Duffy et al., 2015).

When a protected area (PA) is used for tourism, the entire PA is not necessarily exclusively dedicated to this purpose. Instead, a smaller portion is often designated as a national park (NP) and made open for recreational activities, including wildlife tourism activities such as safaris and bird watching. The focus area for this research is Yala PA as a whole. Wildlife tourism, including safari tours, is allowed within the boundaries of

Yala NP which is also called Ruhuna NP, which is an excellent case study for PA tourism. However, the study does not solely concentrate on the Yala NP (Ruhuna NP) and wildlife tourism because Yala possesses tourism potential and ecological value beyond the confines of this NP. Furthermore, wildlife tourism is just one activity conducted within the NP – other activities like ecotourism and adventure tourism also occur. Moreover, the negative impacts of tourism activities, including environmental pollution, are not limited only to the NP but affect the entire Yala PA. Likewise, negative impacts on the community – for example, from deforestation – are not confined to the NP area but extend along the Yala PA boundary. Thus, this research adopts a broader perspective encompassing *PA tourism* rather than restricting its focus solely to wildlife or NP-related tourism.

Although many studies have referred the term 'Protected Area Tourism' and conducted research on the field of PA tourism (Snyman, & Bricker, 2019; Spenceley, & Snyman, 2017; Strickland-Munro, Allison, & Moore, 2010), there lacks a commonly accepted definition among scholars. In a broader sense, the scholars generally regard tourism activities occurring within a Protected Area setting as PA tourism (Leung, Spenceley, Hvenegaard, and Buckley, 2018). To address this gap in the literature regarding a definition for PA tourism, this study suggests a definition specific to the Sri Lankan context: “Protected Area Tourism can be defined as tourism activities conducted within designated protected areas with the aim of experiencing and appreciating natural and cultural values, while simultaneously ensuring the conservation of the PA and the development of the local communities residing nearby”.

The concept of Protected Area Tourism encompasses various forms of tourism, including ecotourism, wildlife tourism, park-based tourism, green tourism, geo-tourism, desert tourism, and nature-based tourism. Activities such as wildlife watching, camping, safari jeep rides, and wildlife photography are common within Sri Lankan Protected Areas. However, activities that involve consumption or harm to wildlife, such as fishing or recreational hunting, are strictly prohibited. Although tourism activities within protected areas are generally referred to as Protected Area Tourism, their impacts extend beyond the boundaries of the protected areas, influencing the environment, economy, local communities, and visitors themselves. Sustainable tourism practices in protected areas should focus on safeguarding environmental and cultural qualities, respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, ensuring equitable socioeconomic benefits,



and providing meaningful visitor experiences that promote a sense of stewardship for nature and protected areas.

### **2.1.1 Impacts of protected area tourism**

Tourism activities in PAs are argued to be a sustainable use of natural resources and a sustainable economic alternative to other economic activities done in the PAs, such as timber harvesting (Dudley et al., 2023; Eagles & McCool, 2002). PA tourism holds promising potential in safeguarding wildlife, preserving forest cover, and conserving natural habitats, thus fostering ecological sustainability (Giongo et al., 1994). Pursuing more sustainable forms of tourism in PAs revolves around fostering visitors' consciousness regarding reducing footprint activities to safeguard and rehabilitate ecosystems and biodiversity (WTTC, 2022). When 80% of global tourism products and services depend on nature, the role of tourism in PAs is vital to reach a 'nature-positive world' by 2030 (Nature Positive, 2023). PA tourism has the capacity to generate enduring economic advantages for the local community, ensuring their active involvement and support in conservation efforts (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2015). The synergistic relationship between PA tourism, environmental preservation and community prosperity underscores the significance of integrated and sustainable conservation strategies.

Several scholars argue that when the connection between PA tourism and the local community is limited, the industry's sustainability is hard to achieve (Akama & Kieti, 2007; Buzinde et al., 2014; Novelli & Humavindu, 2005). Empirical studies have shown a variety of conflicts can emerge between local communities and wildlife (Cui et al., 2021; Laws, 2021; Rubino et al., 2020; World Bank, 2010); between local communities and other PA tourism stakeholders (park management, private operators and tourists) (Snyman, 2019; Spenceley & Snyman, 2016), and between different communities exposed to PA tourism; internal conflicts can also occur between different layers of a community (L. S. Stone et al., 2022).

PA tourism in some developing contexts marginalises the local community, which creates conflicts between wildlife management and local people. Mutanga et al. (2017) found that Indigenous communities were displaced from their ancestral land and forced to alter their traditional economic activities of hunting and gathering due to PA tourism initiatives in Zimbabwe. The authors comment that wealthy tourists pay large sums of money to the government for hunting, while killing the same animals is prohibited for locals. For

example, local farmers can be arrested for 'hunting' even though they are merely trying to protect the few crops they grow from the wild animals. Thus, wildlife tourism activities encroaching on Indigenous lands in Zimbabwe has resulted in conflict between PA management and local communities.

In some PA tourist destinations, the local people and their culture are separated from tourism experiences. Akama and Kieti (2007) use the case of Mombasa City in Kenya, surrounded by several wildlife parks, and find that the government promotes large-scale capital-intensive wildlife tourism while locals are relegated to low-paying jobs. Tourism marketing strategies there often promote wildlife tourism alone and ignore the role that natural resources play in local livelihoods and the fact that many high-value cultural dimensions can be added to the PA visitor experience (He, 2023). In many cases, poor local communities have difficulties accessing safe water and adequate sanitary facilities, whereas the wildlife tourism sector consumes local resources enormously. The wildlife tour packages encompassing NPs in Mombasa offer limited authentic local experiences to tourists. The local people are marginalised from the industry, resulting in reduced benefits to the local communities (Eshun & Tichaawa, 2019).

In other cases, PA tourism activities are overly intrusive on the lives of local people, disturbing and challenging the local communities' traditional economic activities. An example from Maasai Mara, Tanzania, shows PA tourism has interrupted the traditional economic activities of the local pastoral communities (Buzinde et al., 2014). Young males leave their pastoral duties to receive candy or money when the wildlife tourists want to take photographs of Maasai boys in their traditional attire. This leaves cattle vulnerable in the presence of wild predators. Government conservation policies encourage the protection of wildlife populations from developing tourism. However, such steps can lead to increased wildlife attacks on homesteads and livestock, while increasing the number of wildlife herbivores reduces the availability of pastoral land for livestock grazing. Another source of conflict between locals and tourists is the way PA tourists have disturbed local community life by, for example, entering local houses to take photos without permission (Buzinde et al., 2014).

In developing countries, PA tourism profits are often shared unevenly between various stakeholders. In most cases, external stakeholders benefit more than the local community. In their study of Kanha tiger reserve, Sinha et al. (2012) provided evidence of how outsiders benefited when locals were unfamiliar with managing wildlife tourism ventures.

And furthermore, the limited profits locals did make were shared unevenly, with more going to the higher-caste individuals of the community. The case of Kanha exemplifies how external actors can gain control of an Indigenous population, particularly in situations where the local communities lacked sufficient intercultural understanding. This led to challenges in the equitable distribution of benefits among diverse groups characterised by varying power dynamics.

These examples show how conflict can arise from the potentially negative socioeconomic and environmental impacts of PA tourism, specifically: uneven distribution of benefits, external leakages, marginalisation of local communities, exclusion of local culture in the visitor experience, disturbance of local lives, and unethical local resource consumption by PA tourism ventures (Snyman, 2019; Spenceley & Snyman, 2016; M. T. Stone et al., 2022). Empirical evidence from real-world instances has demonstrated the pointlessness of expecting successful conservation of PAs in the absence of active and robust backing from the local community (Manwa, 2003; Wall & Mathieson, 2006). The next section elucidates the potential of PA tourism in facilitating sustainable community development while concurrently attaining the conservation objectives set forth for the PA.

### **2.1.2 Protected area tourism, sustainable community development and conservation**

“Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” (Brundtland, 1987, p. 43). This concept is vital for policymakers, scholars and communities who wish to devise effective strategies that integrate environmental, social, and economic dimensions, promoting responsible and inclusive development. Since its initiation from the Brundtland Commission’s report in 1987, the concept has evolved considerably, encompassing a broader scope, and gaining recognition as a central pillar in international agendas and policies (Shi et al., 2019). For the last few decades, sustainable development has shifted from a predominantly environmental focus to a more comprehensive approach, acknowledging the complex interconnectedness between environmental conservation, social equity, and economic prosperity (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023c).

Many scholars believe that the natural environment can be protected by practising sustainable development principles in any industry, including tourism (Mowforth & Munt, 2016; Wall & Mathieson, 2006). *Sustainable tourism* thoroughly considers its

present and future economic, social, and environmental consequences while catering to visitors' requirements, the industry, the environment, and local communities (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2016). Incorporating sustainable principles into tourism practices is crucial for minimising the sector's adverse impacts while maximising its positive contributions to local economies, communities, and the environment. Tourism can play a pivotal role in promoting sustainable development and fostering long-term community and environmental benefits by adopting a holistic approach that considers the well-being of all stakeholders, including visitors, the industry, host communities and natural ecosystems.

The three fundamental pillars of sustainability are the economy, society, and the environment. An adequate focus on every sustainability pillar is essential in the tourism development process to boost the positive impacts while minimising the adverse effects, with the support of all stakeholders. A critical perspective emphasises that prioritising the environmental pillar is vital, as both the social and economic aspects would inevitably collapse without a foundation of sound ecology (Mowforth & Munt, 2016). In terms of sustainable tourism, these three pillars are informally referred to as profit, people and planet (WTTC, 2022). Economic sustainability ensures profitable growth without negatively affecting society and the environment and encourages linkages between local suppliers, service providers and the community (Ross, n.d.).

Social sustainability in tourism emphasises the value of stakeholder partnerships and collaboration, and the local community's well-being (e.g., education, health, employment, and retention of culture) (Scheyvens & Cheer, 2022). Sustainable forms of tourism consider the local culture of the destination community and offer equal opportunities for the local community to participate and benefit. Environmental sustainability encourages visitors to be responsible, minimise their carbon footprint, avoid intrusive interactions with wildlife, reduce waste, protect natural resources, and conserve the environment.

The United Nations initiated the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015 to apply the principles of sustainable pillars in practice and measure their success. This Agenda is central to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are concerned with economic, social, and environmental sustainability through eradicating poverty, ensuring peace and prosperity in all countries, improving health and education, and reducing inequality while tackling climate changes and preserving oceans and forests

(United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2023b). The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) is committed to providing guidance for the tourism industry and relevant stakeholders to make policies and apply sustainability principles in their businesses and destinations (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2023b). The UNWTO's role involves promoting responsible, accessible, and sustainable tourism to align with the universal 2030 SDGs.

PA tourism offers significant potential to connect the development of host communities and the achievement of many SDGs (Dudley et al., 2023). Active community involvement in tourism, leading to direct economic gains for residents and local businesses, is crucial in garnering their support for successful conservation efforts in PA. The United Nations' SDG 15: 'Life on Land' has 12 targets, one of which is Target 15.7: 'Enhance global support to efforts to combat poaching and trafficking of protected species, including by increasing the capability of local communities to pursue sustainable livelihood opportunities' (Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 2012; United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023b). This target can be achieved by building capacity and enhancing local livelihoods (WTTC, 2019). For example, encouraging and training poachers to engage with ecotourism as ecotour guides enhances their ability to strengthen their financial well-being.

PA tourism provides a wide range of economic opportunities and other social and environmental benefits. Kakum NP in Ghana provides an example of how engagement with ecotourism can reduce the poverty level of the local community (Agyeman et al., 2019). The authors' findings suggest that ecotourism not only plays a role in alleviating poverty, but its positive effects can also be further improved by prioritising non-economic aspects and mitigating adverse impacts on household livelihoods. Research by Mutanga et al. (2017) on four NPs in Zimbabwe demonstrated that effective utilisation of economic and political resources can lead to the successful attainment of both economic development and conservation objectives. These research findings are important for Yala PA in pursuing its tourism prospects to, for example, find ways to link the livelihoods of the local people to PA tourism.

Prior research indicates that well-managed PA tourism can yield positive outcomes through strong connections with local communities, allowing residents and local businesses to maximise the substantial benefits derived from tourism activities. Economic benefits of PA tourism for the local community can be found in employment or business

creation, social development, education, health, and well-being (Scheyvens & Cheer, 2022). Yergeau (2020) conducted a multilevel analysis of Nepal's PAs, establishing a positive correlation between self-employment and community welfare. Similarly, Sarr et al. (2021) found that in Langue de Barbarie National Park, Senegal, social representation serves as a mechanism for community empowerment in PA tourism. And in the context of Jotunheimen National Park and Utladalen Protected Landscape in Norway, Muñoz et al. (2019) highlighted the significance of valuing local culture in PA tourism.

NPs and PAs have the potential to not only support tourism but also generate community benefits and support the park's conservation (Ballantyne et al., 2011; Buckley et al., 2012; Cimon-Morin et al., 2013; Kiss, 2004). Gadd (2005) and Mijele et al. (2013) showed that when the local economic benefits from tourism are direct and tangible, the Laikipa pastoral community in Kenya was more willing to actively participate in elephant conservation initiatives. In research conducted in Western Uganda (Archabald & Naughton-Treves, 2001) and Kruger NP, South Africa (Grünewald et al., 2016), the authors found that national policies that actively involve local stakeholders in the development process and equitably distribute tourism revenue to local communities play a pivotal role in cultivating favourable attitudes towards conservation at the local level. Likewise, a study conducted in the Nanling National Nature Reserve in China also confirmed that community participation in PA tourism is the most powerful tool for protecting PAs and conservation (Zhang et al., 2020). However, the prevailing model is for central and local governments to promote tourism without considering the desires and aspirations of local communities (Cimon-Morin et al., 2013). Therefore, empirical investigations are needed to explore how PA tourism can bring benefits to local communities.

## **2.2 Local community development**

A 'community' tends to be defined by geographical dimensions such as place and spatial boundaries and/or by a set of people, not necessarily geographically bound, who have common interests and values and are emotionally related; for example, communities in online platforms (de Boer & van Dijk, 2016; Eagles & McCool, 2002). For the purpose of this PhD study, which is focused on the PA tourism context, the local community is defined by both its location and people; specifically, in the context of this study, the local community comprises those residents and businesses who live in neighbouring villages and who share the boundary with the Yala PA.

In PA tourism, proximate communities often face both positive and negative impacts of tourism growth and conservation (Buzinde et al., 2014). These communities may have different levels of exposure to a park and its wildlife, management, and tourists (Stone & Nyaupane, 2016). Richards and Hall (2003) emphasised the significant value of studying the local community in tourism because not only is the local community one of the 'pull factors' that attract tourists, but the local community can also potentially change the natural environment that tourists visit. Thus, the local community plays an essential role in PA tourism destinations, and so should be included in any PA tourism study.

Community development is highly contextualised, and its focus can change spatially and/or temporally (Campfens, 1999). The early definition of the community development concept considered community development to be a process aimed at fostering economic and social advancement for the entire community through active involvement and utmost reliance on the community's initiative (UN, 1955, p. 6). Originally, this concept focused on top-down approaches led by external agencies seeking to address specific issues within communities. This model faced criticism for its lack of sustainability and failure to involve local residents in decision-making processes. Over the years, a shift towards participatory and bottom-up approaches emerged, emphasising the importance of empowering communities to self-identify their needs and drive their own development (Phillips & Pittman, 2014). This paradigm change acknowledged the significance of community engagement, ownership, and capacity building, leading to more effective and sustainable outcomes in community development initiatives (Waibel, 2012).

By grasping the different community development definitions through the relevant literature mentioned earlier, this doctoral research conceptualises *community development* as a collaborative endeavour undertaken by local residents to enhance their living conditions through the principles of sustainable development. Through this collective effort, the community strives for economic progress and social well-being, embracing empowerment, inclusivity, social justice, and equality as guiding principles. Moreover, community-led development processes actively address environmental sustainability concerns within their local areas. Success in implementation and execution is understood as community members coming together to decide and strategise on the necessary steps. The community development approach that this study seeks for the case study community of Ranakeliya is to integrate and manage PA tourism to achieve economic and social advancement for its members while simultaneously working towards fulfilling the conservation goals of Yala.

Community development is identified as an educational process and a form of social change that seeks a common solution for a particular problem. Previous studies have demonstrated that community development through tourism can generate benefits, but it can also create and exacerbate jealousy and power struggles between or within communities (DeLuca, 2002; Schwarz, 2009). Bhattacharyya (2004) stated that promoting solidarity among residents is the key goal of community development while minimising conflicts of interest. Solidarity should be achieved through mutual understanding, sharing norms and values, and caring for and respecting community members (Sharpe et al., 2016).

Achieving the key goal of community development through tourism is centralised in the concept of community-based tourism, which has become popular since the 1970s (Khartishvili et al., 2020). *Community-based tourism* (CBT) can be defined as tourism that is owned, led, and managed *by* the community *for* the community. CBT has introduced an alternative form of tourism to mass tourism in developing countries and encouraged tourists to learn about the local community, culture, and lifestyle (Makwindi & Ndlovu, 2021; Murphy, 2011). The CBT approach then led to several other community-oriented development concepts like pro-poor tourism (Hall, 2007) and community-based enterprises (Manyara, 2007).

In CBT, the local community is encouraged to consider itself part of the tourism product, which empowers the local residents to design their own future (Nguyen, 2019). Essential components to developing effective CBT are a better understanding of the local context and the current impacts of tourism on locals, and a case-based approach that is adaptive to local perspectives (Khartishvili et al., 2020). The community's value extends beyond human resources and encompasses various other assets (Emery & Flora, 2006), making it crucial to consider these factors when strategising for CBT. Thus, achieving a comprehensive understanding of the resources owned or accessible to the local community is essential in the planning process for CBT initiatives. Here it is useful to draw on community capital literature and the Community Capital Framework.

### **2.2.1 The Community Capital Framework**

*Capital* has been defined as “a resource or asset that can be used, invested, or exchanged to create new resources” (Flora et al., 2004, p. 1). The *Community Capital Framework* (CCF) is a tool that enables researchers to analyse how a community works and the interrelationships between different community capitals (CCs). The CCF introduces



seven types of capital: human, social, cultural, political, financial, physical, and natural (Emery & Flora, 2006). Each of these forms of capital holds the potential to foster community development.

*Community capitals* can be categorised as either human-based or non-human-based. *Human-based capitals* comprise human, social, cultural, and political capitals. *Human capital* is focused on knowledge and skills formed by education, training, or experience. *Social capital* refers to the bonds between family, neighbours and communities that build relationships, links, and networks. Solidarity is an important aspect in social capital and is a decisive factor for community development (Emery et al., 2006). *Cultural capital* relates to how a community views the world, its values like heritage, traditions, customs, language, food, legends and dances, and its links to spiritual beliefs (Knollenberg et al., 2022). *Political capital* refers to the involvement of community leaders and committees to empower and strengthen the community, exemplified by initiatives such as CBT projects (Knollenberg et al., 2022). Political capital encompasses the capacity of a community to establish connections with both local leaders and external political figures who wield influence. This ability enables individuals to find their voice and take proactive measures to improve their well-being (Flora et al., 2004).

The *non-human-based capitals* are finance, physical and natural capital. *Financial capital* relates to the community's capacity to access funds – for example, from banks, investments and/or savings – and to optimise the economic linkages within or outside the community. *Physical (infrastructural) capital* includes man-made assets such as schools, hospitals, businesses, transport infrastructure, electrical grids, communication systems and water supply systems. *Natural capital* incorporates renewable and non-renewable resources and natural systems' capacities to provide valuable goods and services; for example, a fish stock or a forest (Knollenberg et al., 2022). With human capital engagement, one capital can be transformed into another; for example, selling a plot of land will convert natural capital into financial capital.

While the CCF offers a valuable lens for understanding the multifaceted nature of community development, some weaknesses can be identified (Mattos, 2015). The term capital seems to refer to capitalising and commodifying resources, even those that cannot be assigned objective meanings, such as a community's social relationships and cultural norms. One notable concern revolves around oversimplifying complex community dynamics which are hard to identify in the real world, especially in a multi-cultural social

context like Sri Lanka, into discrete forms of capital. This leads to questions about the framework's adaptability and transferability, especially when it is applied in diverse cultural and geographic contexts.

Some scholars highlight the challenge of quantifying and measuring intangible aspects of capital, such as trust and solidarity, which are vital for community development (Pigg et al., 2013). Yet despite these criticisms, the CCF continues to evolve and adapt through ongoing scholarly work, including the PA tourism context, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the resources and relationships that determine community well-being.

The CCF is beneficial in understanding a community's strengths, how those strengths can contribute to the success of tourism in their local area, and the appropriate type(s) of development required. This understanding enables tourism to become an effective strategy and tool for community development (Habito-Javier, 2012). CCF is not only a theoretical framework but also provides a practical guide for planning towards sustainable community development (Gutierrez-Montes et al., 2009). Adopting system thinking to understand the complexity of different contexts is a common approach in tourism research (Aquino et al., 2018; Stone & Nyaupane, 2016). *Systems thinking* is an all-encompassing approach that centres around the interconnectedness and interdependence of elements within a system. It delves into understanding how each component of the system intricately links with one another. One capital may have a positive or negative impact on another within a community system when facilitating capitals for PA tourism development.

The use of the CCF in tourism research usually emphasises a single capital, particularly social capital. McGehee et al. (2015), for example, highlighted the role of leadership in developing rural tourism with case-based examples from America and Tahiti; Hwang and Stewart (2017) introduced the importance of social capital for collaborative practices in rural tourism, engaging two communities on Jeju Island, South Korea; and Taylor (2017) identified the use of gender dynamics and income flows to measure the success of community-based Indigenous tourism in a rural Maya village in Mexico. Some authors have looked at outside stakeholders' relationships through the social capital lens (Hwang & Stewart, 2017; Walker, 2014) and argue that stakeholders' interactions are not limited to a single capital. Aquino et al. (2018) conceptualised the utilisation of tourism social entrepreneurs in sustainable community development. However, it is important to note

that their study does not specifically focus on PA tourism or examine the interactions between stakeholders and CC.

Even though researchers have identified the different combinations of CC that are essential depending on their specific case studies, they have commonly highlighted the importance of human capital for social capital. Various authors argue that some capitals are more critical than others. Lima and d'Hauteserre (2011) emphasised that prioritising human, natural and social capital is crucial for improving the livelihoods of the forest communities through ecotourism based on their research in the Amazon Rain Forest. More recently, Kline's (2017) research revealed that human, social and political capitals are more valuable in terms of developing cultural capital through craft heritage tourism in western North Carolina. But in contrast, Bennett et al. (2012) prioritised human, financial and physical capitals over social and cultural capitals for tourism development in aboriginal communities' PAs in Canada.

Enhancing human-based capitals (i.e, social, political, human, and cultural capitals) by integrating them with non-human capital, such as natural, physical, and financial resources, can foster a skilled and productive workforce for PA tourism. According to Gil's et al.'s (2021) study on craft beverage tourism and creative placemaking in North Carolina, the passion for traditional craft production can pass down the generations by introducing innovative approaches like modern technologies.

### **2.2.2 The Community Capital Framework and protected area tourism**

While there has been significant research on CC in tourism in general, studies that have adopted the CCF in PA tourism have been relatively limited in their approach, with the majority who used the approach prioritising one capital over others and not paying much attention to the notion of sustainable tourism (Hwang & Stewart, 2017).

Walker (2014) studied social capital implications in marine wildlife tourism in the South-Pacific region with the case study of Tonga. This study highlights the importance of building linkages between the local community and other stakeholders in order to understand the local community's socioenvironmental goals and values in the form of ecotourism and so to gain more benefits for the destination community. Stone and Nyaupane (2016) studied all forms of CC in PA tourism and community livelihood linkages. This study took a comprehensive approach by looking at how one capital can be interdependent with other capitals. Stone and Nyaupane (2018) discussed how CC

stock and flows function and how the flows of CC can play a dynamic role, spiralling up and down the sustainability of community livelihood. Stone and Nyaupane (2018) studied the interrelationship of all the different forms of CC with a system-thinking approach within a comprehensive framework, but this approach cannot capture the complexity of stakeholder interactions.

Balanced development of CCs is essential to a community's well-being (Kline, 2017; Stone & Nyaupane, 2017). When external stakeholders only focus on the forms of capital they need to facilitate PA tourism, the outcomes can be problematic. Lima and d'Hauteserre (2011) conducted a study on livelihood enhancement in the Amazon rainforest, wherein they emphasised that in PAs with tourism activities, communities ought to focus on enhancing their existing capital. By doing so, these community capitals can subsequently contribute to the overall well-being and prosperity of the local inhabitants. Hwang and Stewart (2017) state that social capital should be enhanced through collective action which needs strong stakeholder relationships. Their views are supported by Shoeb-Ur-Rahman et al. (2020), who posit that the co-management (by community and external stakeholders) of CC can ensure a community's well-being through sustainable tourism development. However, co-management of CC becomes unfeasible in situations where external stakeholders wield significant power and influence. The CC inherently pertains to the local community, necessitating that their development and management be independently driven by the community itself.

Xu et al. (2009) found economic inequality in a community near Wolong Nature Reserve in China due to a lack of start-up capital and skills to utilise existing PA tourism resources. Local capacity building through training was required to enable the locals to contribute to tourism development in their area and to PA management of the Nature Reserve. Institutions in developing countries are often incredibly fragmented and lack coordination mechanisms to collaborate with local communities and other stakeholders (Chaminda, 2016; Lima & d'Hauteserre, 2011). Hence, the sustainable use of local resources is hard to achieve in the PA tourism planning process (Bello et al., 2017). CC consumption in PA tourism often entails significant costs for the local community, including local inflation, land loss, displacement, and limitations on accessing traditional agricultural or economic activities (Snyman, 2019). The author also found challenges in PA tourism associated with communal land encroachment, misuse of resources and employing locals for low-paid jobs in developing countries.

Stone and Nyaupane (2017) state that tourism can have both positive and negative impacts on PAs and their local communities. Furthermore, a positive impact on one capital may lead to a negative impact on another. For example, selling land to outsiders may generate financial capital for the community, but in so doing, the community has also lost some of its natural capital. Hence, studying the impact of PA tourism on each capital in isolation is pointless as each capital has a relative value. Stone and Nyaupane (2017) provided an in-depth analysis showing that attempts to protect PAs with rules and regulations failed, whereas identifying PAs as a CC that the local community should protect proved to be more successful. Interpreting natural resources like parks and wildlife as a community capital empowers the community to participate in conservation and encourages them to be more responsible. Consistent with Stone and Nyaupane's findings, Kline (2017) posited that as one capital develops (e.g., physical capital), another capital tends to be depleted (e.g., financial capital). To meet its needs, a community must become resilient and find the best balance of CC development in PA tourism.

The growth of social capital between different stakeholders helps link socioenvironmental goals in PA tourism, which benefits the host community in return (Lima & d'Hautesserre, 2011). A lack of mutual understanding among PA tourism stakeholders about environmental goals for the PA and community needs is a weakness, and can, for example, result in a lack of shared vision for conservation. Organising social capital by improving coordination among various stakeholders is the most challenging starting point in PA tourism (Stone & Nyaupane, 2018). To link locals and outsiders, an important first step is to develop a close relationship between these stakeholders; one that is built on trust, reciprocity, and collective norms (Bennett et al., 2012; Walker, 2014).

There is a paucity of PA tourism literature about the ability of stakeholders to *access* all forms of community capital and the impacts that stem from doing so (Hwang & Stewart, 2017; Stone & Nyaupane, 2018; Walker, 2014). Prior research has predominantly concentrated on social capital within the context of investigating interactions between external stakeholders and local communities. These studies typically highlight the considerable benefits such engagements bring to the community, including external investments, among other advantages (Kline, 2017; Lima & d'Hautesserre, 2011; Shueb-Ur-Rahman et al., 2020). Habito-Javier (2012) recognised tourism as a complex activity involving numerous stakeholders. In this context, social capital plays a crucial role in facilitating an understanding of the community's envisioned future with the assistance of external stakeholders. Hwang and Stewart (2017) idea partially reflects the experience of

Yala. According to these authors, the outside stakeholders also benefit the local community socially by bringing in new information, expertise, facilities, and opportunities to develop tourism.

The core notion of CC revolves around generating value for the community and achieving community development through PA tourism. However, when Alam and Paramati (2016) examined data from 1991 to 2012 for 49 developing countries across the world, their findings indicated that tourism substantially increases income inequality. Scheyvens and van der Watt (2021) further affirm that tourism often channels its revenue towards a privileged few, typically individuals with greater power, such as male entrepreneurs. This unequal income distribution resulting from tourism can sometimes lead to disempowerment. Understanding the obstacles to economic empowerment and how tourism reinforces inequalities is equally vital. Therefore, tourism initiatives striving for empowerment must explicitly address class, racial, and gender-based inequalities within their social and cultural contexts.

As a proposed solution to address income disparities, wherein only a few individuals become rich while the majority remain poor, Giampiccoli and Mtapuri (2020) have introduced the ‘investment redistributive incentive model’. This model aims to redistribute tourism investments by fostering locally controlled enterprises (financial capital), restructuring the management of companies to promote equity and justice (social capital), and facilitating collaborations between foreign investors and educational institutions to develop a skilled workforce (human capital).

The ultimate goal of the investment redistributive incentive model, and also the CCF, is to empower local communities and place them at the centre of the development process. However, the practical applicability and potential effectiveness of this incentive-based investment redistributive instrument in supporting sustainable tourism in developing countries, particularly within the context of PA tourism, requires further investigation. Empirical studies are needed to explore and evaluate the feasibility and impact of implementing such a model in these settings.

### **2.3 Stakeholder theory**

Stakeholder theory, first introduced by Freeman in 1980s, has evolved and developed significantly over time through various contributions and refinements from scholars and researchers (Freeman, 1984). This ongoing development has led to a more nuanced and

comprehensive understanding of stakeholders' roles and interests in industrial and social contexts (Reed et al., 2009). Stakeholder theory refers to a conceptual framework that identifies and analyses individuals or groups with a vested interest in a particular endeavour, such as PA tourism. Applying stakeholder theory in PA tourism research enables a comprehensive understanding of the different stakeholders involved and their potential impacts on sustainable tourism development in PA destinations like Yala.

A tourism stakeholder can be defined as any collective or individual with the potential to influence or be affected by tourism operations in a specific region (Freeman, 1984, p. 46). Thus, any actor who can make an impact on or is affected by PA tourism activities is identified as a key stakeholder in this study. In its early days of development, researchers applying the stakeholder theory sought to determine who were the important stakeholders in a particular industry (R. K. Mitchell et al., 1997), but later on the focus has shifted to studying the relationships between diverse stakeholders and their interactions (Neville & Menguc, 2006).

The World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) (2022) identified a large number of stakeholders relevant to PA tourism:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| • park planners and managers                         | • non-governmental organisations                 |
| • park volunteers                                    | • environmental groups                           |
| • park visitors                                      | • economic development organisations             |
| • park employees                                     | • concessionaires, licensees, and permit holders |
| • local community                                    | • hospitality industry                           |
| • native or indigenous community                     | • tour operators                                 |
| • landowners (in and around the area)                | • destination marketing organisations            |
| • residents (in and around the area)                 | • educational institutions                       |
| • resource extraction interests                      | • research bodies, and                           |
| • government ministries                              | • media.   |
| • allied and sometimes competing government agencies |  |
| • profit-making private sector                       |  |

As there are many parties interested in PA tourism, the WCPA categorised them into four key stakeholder groups: local communities, park managers, tourism operators, and visitors. These four groups are significant in managing PA tourism in NPs as each has a unique viewpoint on PA tourism (Eagles et al., 2002). Luštický and Musil (2016) analysed 28 papers published between 1990 and 2015 on stakeholder perceptions of tourism impacts and, like the WCPA, categorised the actors into four key –but slightly different – stakeholder groups: government and public agencies, private enterprises,

visitors, and community. In a multicultural society like Sri Lanka, grouping the local community into one category would be insufficient as the ethnic minority and Indigenous communities' voices need to be heard.

Stakeholder theory's key argument of sustainability encourages creating more value over time and place (Freeman et al., 2007). PA tourism should be organised so that not only is every stakeholder satisfied with what they give and receive, but also their contributions and benefits are viable long-term. Thus, the environment should be embedded in every stakeholder discussion. Some scholars have been critical of a perceived exclusive focus on human stakeholders in PA tourism literature and raised concerns about the unethical objectification and commodification of animals, particularly in wildlife tourism settings, relegating them to underprivileged roles in the context of responsible tourism (Burns, 2015).

Each stakeholder group has different skills and abilities they can contribute to managing PA tourism. No individual group can solve PA tourism issues alone (Hardy & Pearson, 2017); rather, every stakeholder plays a distinct and essential role in PA tourism development. Park management is usually carried out by government representatives who have been given the power to protect NPs, their boundaries, and the resources within them (Mannetti et al., 2019). Park management, or a public agency for conservation, also contribute to PA tourism by providing technical or scientific resources to stakeholder groups. The private sector has the financial capacity to invest and can help the local community build new social relationships in PA tourism. For example, Snyman and Bricker (2019) highlight one way to connect visitors with the local community: through facilitating village tours. And finally, members of the local community can provide knowledge and labour for PA tourism development in NPs (Karst, 2017). Thus, each stakeholder group contributes in different ways to PA tourism development. Understanding the specific strengths and perceptions of each of the stakeholder groups in PA tourism can provide long-term site-specific solutions in PAs (Anthopoulou & Melissourgos, 2013; Boyer et al., 2016; Chang, 1997; Milne, 1998; Mowforth & Munt, 2016; Shackleton, 2002).

Using a stakeholder approach in PA tourism studies is important to understand stakeholder relationships, prioritise their interactions, identify each group's responsibilities, and build cooperation (Kujala et al., 2019). It must be remembered, however, that relationships between various stakeholders and their interactions with the



tourism industry are complex (Kim, 2013; Lyon et al., 2017). Donaldson and Preston (1995) developed three aspects of stakeholder theory to analyse the characteristics and relationships between multiple stakeholders: the *descriptive* aspect concerns how stakeholders behave and think about their role, the *instrumental* aspect deals with relationships between stakeholder management and the goal of the business, and the *normative* aspect emphasises the value of moral and philosophical guidelines in collaborative work to widen mutual understanding among the different stakeholder groups. However, the relationships between the different stakeholder groups in a PA tourism setting need to be better understood in order to create a feasible path towards sustainable tourism development (Heslinga et al., 2019). Stakeholders are responsible for consuming natural resources, which can be depleted or enhanced when facilitating the PA tourism product. In return, stakeholders should share the costs and benefits of PA tourism within three dimensions: economic, sociocultural, and environmental (Mannetti et al., 2019).

It is worthwhile to mention that there are weaknesses in stakeholder analysis. As noted earlier, the World Commission on Protected Areas (2022) identified a large number of stakeholders relevant to PA-based tourism, and their relationships are always dynamic and complicated in different PA tourism contexts (L. S. Stone et al., 2022). Some argue that the stakeholders change over time, and their relationships could change accordingly (Derry, 2012; Kujala et al., 2019); therefore, PA tourism managers always need to be up to date with the current status of stakeholders. Another weakness in stakeholder analysis is that the stakeholders' priorities are dynamic and evolve over time.

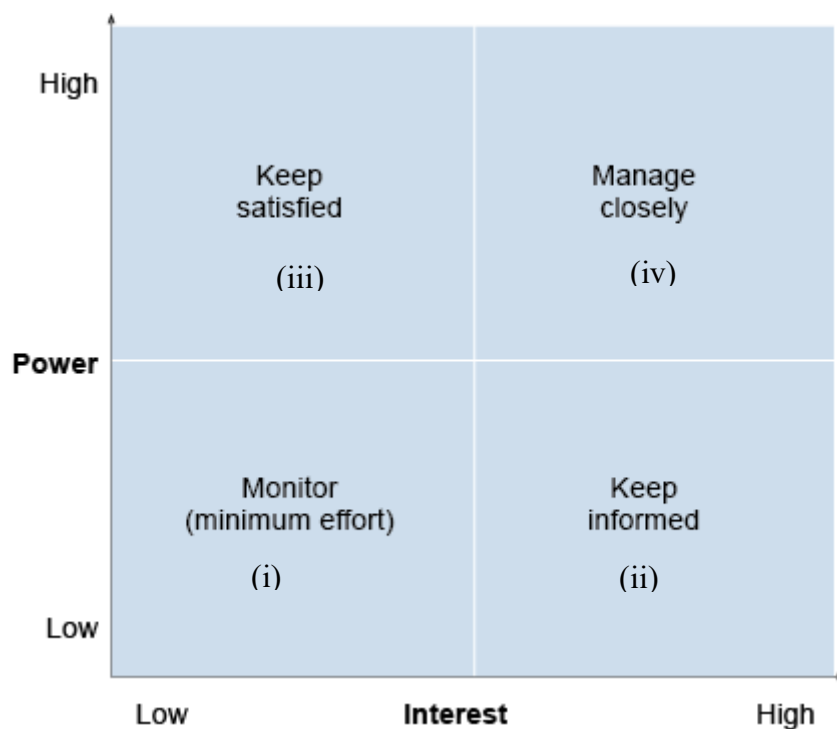
The present body of literature in PA tourism studies uses stakeholder theory to investigate stakeholder relationships (Lyon et al., 2017), but it does not explicitly investigate the interactions between external stakeholders and the local community concerning the use of CC for the development of PA tourism. Furthermore, existing literature has overlooked exploring the community's viewpoint on the effects of such external engagement.

This research embraces the concept that the intended outcome of community development is to improve the lives of locals through collaborative decision making involving local residents. The research argues that community development is impossible to achieve through local community participation alone – external stakeholders who interact with a particular community in various ways must also be considered (Hardy & Pearson, 2017). The research aims to discover how PA tourism stakeholders influence

each other and how the case study community in Ranakeliya participate in the development process (Mannetti et al., 2019).

Mendelow's stakeholder matrix (Figure 2.1) helps provide an overview of the stakeholders' positions, which can be adapted to position different stakeholder groups in the PA tourism context according to their power and interests (Lyon et al., 2017). 'Interest' on the *x*-axis represents the level of interest each stakeholder group shows, while the *y*-axis indicates the level of power each stakeholder group has. Each stakeholder group's level of interest and power can vary according to their role and the experience or benefit they gain (or have gained) through PA tourism. The grid contains four cells, each labelled based on the stakeholder management strategy. Stakeholder groups or individuals are placed on the grid's two dimensions – power and interest – and subsequently treated according to the quadrant in which they are positioned.

**Figure 2.1 The stakeholders' power/interest matrix**



*Source:* Adopted from Open University (n.d.)

The stakeholders in quadrant (i) low interest and low power need to be intermittently monitored for their impacts and shifts, if any, in their levels of interest or power. The stakeholders in quadrant (ii) low power and high interest need to be thoroughly informed and engaged in dialogue to proactively address any potential major issues (e.g., irresponsible tourism behaviours). These stakeholders can offer valuable insights to

identify areas that may require improvement or have not been adequately considered. The stakeholders in quadrant (iii) low interest and high power need to be engaged at a sufficient level, when necessary, to ensure their contentment (e.g., to fulfil the standards of the government agencies). And finally, the stakeholders in quadrant (iv) high interest and high power need to be managed closely. Managers need to strive to actively involve the stakeholders in this quadrant, expending the highest efforts to ensure this group's satisfaction (e.g., respecting the park's management rules and regulations). Mendelow's stakeholder matrix will be employed in this research to position each stakeholder group's power and interest in relation to Yala PA tourism. The following section will now discuss diverse stakeholders interested in tourism in a protected natural setting, and how the power of each stakeholder group circulates according to their roles and engagement with PA tourism.

## **2.4 Political ecology**

Political ecology addresses critical issues that stem from human interaction and the surrounding environment (Schubert, 2007). Diamond (2013, p. 9) defines political ecology as a framework for investigating the intricate political landscape concerning the environment in a country, which significantly influences the dynamics of nature preservation. The political ecology approach emerged in the 1970s and focused on growing concern over the complicated relationships between environmental issues and political power structures. This approach interprets how political and economic interests influence environmental decision making and resource management. In this research, political ecology provides a valuable framework for the examination of the complex interaction between political, economic, and natural features that shape the community development and conservation practices subject to PA tourism in Yala.

The political ecology approach provides an insight into complex situations related to natural resource consumption, such as conflicts in accessing resources, imbalanced power relationships (based on gender, race, poverty, etc.), socioeconomic and political influences, and a threat or pressure on the environment (Bryant, 1998; Castree, 2009; Formo, 2010; Rocheleau et al., 1996). The approach examines what socioeconomic circumstances have caused environmental conflicts and what political power is needed to resolve them (Svarstad et al., 2018).

Saito and Ruhanen (2017) stated that power could be imposed on someone's will and increase their interest in something. Wrong (1979) believes that authority power

(accepted power to control) influences tourism in an inter-institutional setting and asserts that there are four types of authority power: coercive, induced, legitimate and competent. Coercive power involves the enforcement of regulations, such as the creation and implementation of policies for environmental protection; induced power entails the capability to regulate other stakeholders to some extent by offering incentives or rewards; legitimate power pertains to the ability to influence others based on one's position or authority and the associated administrative responsibilities; and finally, competent power exemplifies the capacity of individuals wielding power and influence to utilise their knowledge and expertise effectively (Saito & Ruhanen, 2017).

In the context of this doctoral research on PA tourism, 'power' refers to the capacity of an organisation (e.g., governmental, public agency, business) or individual to influence the behaviour of another party (Mannetti et al., 2019). This conceptualisation of power is essential for understanding the dynamics and roles of various stakeholders involved in Yala PA tourism management and benefit sharing.

Political ecology focuses on the consequences of environmental changes, such as how different communities interpret or experience these changes, what conflicts have been raised by the changes and who are the winners and the losers (Bollig, 2016; Massé, 2016). The stories of winners and losers reveal the circumstances of justice and injustice by raising the case of social inequality in developing countries in PA tourism settings (Mostafanezhad et al., 2016). Tourism development examples in developing contexts show how the long-term existence of winners and losers could lead to environmental conflicts (Massé, 2016). The concept of ecotourism is inevitably set up to address the 'winners and losers' scenario in tourism, because *ecotourism* refers to a conscientious form of travel aimed at conserving the environment and supporting the well-being of the local community (International Ecotourism Society, n.d.).

The ecotourism concept considers the solution to social inequalities created in rural tourist destinations in third-world settings. Ecotourism represents a reliable form of tourism to protect the environment and nurture the local communities' well-being. In developing countries, ecotourism is increasingly regarded as a viable solution to address social inequalities arising from tourism activities. By prioritising sustainability and local engagement, ecotourism endeavours to empower and uplift the marginalised populations in these settings.

### **Three elements**

The theoretical foundation of political ecology encompasses three essential elements, five predominant themes, and three fundamental assumptions that can be applied when conducting an analytical investigation adopting this approach. The three core elements of a political ecology approach are that the analysis is historically situated, has a place-based perspective, and uses a multi-scaler approach (Robbins, 2012). As Douglas argues:

The conceptual framework of political ecology provides a contextual lens for analysing the problems and potentials of tourism in the context of people, nature, and power by examining ecological issues from a place-based, multi-scalar and historically situated perspective. (2014, p. 12)

Colonialism-related environmental issues are examined through the historically situated dimension (Sultana, 2021); a place-based perspective means engaging the local community and those familiar with their context – for example, the specific area, cultural, linguistic and socioeconomic context (Katju & Kyle, 2021); and a multi-scaler approach shows the relationships between and across individuals and communities at local, state, regional and international levels, and how each group of decisions and practices can affect the environment and local community (Dutta, 2018). This research has used a place-based perspective and multi-scaler approach from political ecology analysis to identify PA tourism stakeholders' links with the local community at different scales of stakeholders in Yala. The dimension of historically situated was not employed in this study because the primary focus was on gathering empirical evidence about the current situation in Yala and understanding the impacts of protected area PA tourism on the Ranakeliya community. While the literature review discusses historical events, such as how they shaped the number of tourist arrivals in Sri Lanka, and occasionally reveals past incidents (e.g., the conflict between park management and the community), the study itself does not extensively explore historical aspects in the primary data collection. Therefore, it is not accurate to claim that this study reflects the historically situated aspect of political ecology, as the emphasis is on the contemporary context.

### **Five themes**

Political ecology is also concerned with the interactions between humans and the environment. In particular, political ecology is concerned with the environmental conflicts created through human interactions with the natural environment and resources. Hence, political ecologist Paul Robbins developed five dominant themes within political ecology research: degradation and marginalisation, conservation and control,

environmental conflicts and exclusion, ecological subjects and identities, and political objects and actors (Robbins, 2012).

*Degradation and marginalisation* are concerned with resource over-exploitation, where local communities are marginalised by wealthy people, which leads to poverty. Mannetti et al. (2019) found that trophy hunting in Namibia encourages commercial hunting while the traditional hunting communities are displaced from their lands and marginalised from their customary livelihoods.

The *conservation and control* theme emphasises situations that arise from controlling and limiting the access of resources from the resource owners (the local community) to manage sustainability. Bennett (2019) literature-based study demonstrates how the institutionalisation of some coastal areas in developing contexts as Marine PAs has meant that the local fishermen are no longer allowed to gather food from their traditional fishing areas. This example highlights the need to consider potential negative social impacts on the local community when implementing important conservation actions (Clements et al., 2023).

The *environmental conflicts and exclusion* theme explains that the exclusion of the prior resource users can lead to conflicts, such as those between locals and PA management for the use of lands along a park boundary (Environment and Ecology, 2022).

The fourth theme, *ecological subjects, and identities*, involves emerging new local political leadership. It examines these new leaders' world views and how they strive to protect their identities and resources from the existing political leadership.

The fifth theme in a political ecology analysis looks at the *political objects and actors* who are engaged with political activities and are agents for resource management. These actors assign new roles and take new actions to transform human interactions with natural resources (Bauler, n.d).

### **Three assumptions**

The five dominant themes in this interdisciplinary political ecology approach are based on three fundamental assumptions (Bryant & Bailey, 1997): (1) that *costs and benefits* are unequally distributed in a society or community due to various socioeconomic reasons, and that political power plays a dominant role (Environment and Ecology, 2022); (2) that the *uneven distribution* of benefits reduces existing socioeconomic inequalities,

and the political ecology concerns the economic benefits in this assumption (Bauler, n.d.); and (3) that *power relations* need to be adjusted with alternative relationships of power (Environment and Ecology, 2022). These three aspects will unpack the winners (outsiders: private sector elites) and losers (insiders: the local community) dynamic of Yala PA tourism (Massé, 2016).

Several scholars claim that even though a considerable amount of tourism research addresses issues that are relevant to political ecology, prior to the mid-2010s, only a few researchers had applied a political ecology approach to analyse tourism practices (Douglas, 2014; Nepal et al., 2016; Thompson-Carr, 2016). More recently, tourism research using a political ecology approach has emerged, and authors commonly discuss the political issues related to environmental sustainability and political ecology in NPs (Mostafanezhad & Norum, 2019; Rai et al., 2019), economic values of ecosystems (Menon & Rai, 2019), sustainable outcomes in tourism destinations (Knowles, 2019), and empowering women for conservation (Mkono et al., 2021).

#### **2.4.1 Political ecology and protected area tourism**

PA tourism research employing the political ecology approach can be divided into four main groups: marginalisation of local communities from resources, government weakness, power relationships between stakeholder groups, and community-based planning for environmental conservation. Examples from each of these areas of research will now be presented and discussed.

##### **Marginalisation of local communities from resources**

Researchers have found that local communities are often marginalised through unequal access to natural resources while outside stakeholders tend to benefit financially from the tourism industry. For example, Cole and Morgan (2010) highlighted the issue of water quality and tourism when heavy water usage by the tourism industry in Bali resulted in local people facing limited access to potable water. Their study took place at a time when 80% of the country's economy depended on tourism. The authors highlighted the power differences between tourism stakeholders. Tourism has resulted in the local community having unequal access to land and other natural resources in Bali.

Likewise, Holroyd (2016) showed how tourism at Mt. Kilimanjaro, Tanzania, economically marginalised the local community by limiting resource access. The community was not allowed to access the forest for their traditional livelihoods or to

collect firewood, leading to conflicts with the park management. Thus, limited access to resources had challenged the livelihoods and well-being of the local community, including their safety. Meanwhile, Sarrasin (2013) argued that ecotourism in Ranomafana NP, Madagascar, has failed to generate the benefits for the poor that had been expected as the local community has limited employment opportunities. Mismanagement of natural resources is the key issue raised from Sarrasin's political ecology analysis of this case study, which questions the long-term sustainability of ecotourism.

Building tourism-related constructions in environmentally sensitive areas by politically powerful outsiders is typical in Sri Lankan PAs (Chaminda, 2016), similar to many other developing contexts (Akama & Kieti, 2007; Primavera, 2000). Outside private companies gain more economic benefits than the locals through PA tourism businesses, and government officers often fail to control this situation – partly due to the political support these companies give to those in power (Chaminda, 2016). The first groups who studied about the Marginalisation of local communities from resources discuss the negative impacts of PA tourism in their respective case-study communities. Yet, none of these studies provide a comprehensive analysis of CC or the usage of the different forms of community capital by the different stakeholders in generating such impacts.

### **Government weakness**

Researchers employing the political ecology approach have also examined government inefficiency, political corruption, and interference in PA tourism. Various authors have noted the weakness of central and local government sectors in their role as PA tourism stakeholders in developing countries (Koot, 2019; Koot & Hitchcock, 2019). Phong (2014), for example, highlighted Vietnam's bureaucratic burden and its lack of institutional capacities, while according to Hannam (2005) and Sinha et al. (2012), the controversial issues in the Indian PA tourism sector are its lack of ecotourism policies, inappropriate code of ethics and conflicts between government ministries. Meanwhile, Paudel (2016) studied the political ecology of Nepal's PA tourism sector and concluded that the country's legislation and policies are partially muddled due to the failures of the government's management approaches.

Other scholars have raised similar issues, in some African examples (Buzinde et al., 2014; Koot & Hitchcock, 2019). In his study of trophy hunting in Namibia, Koot (2019) found that issues such as inequalities and disparities had been ignored and that, combined with the inefficiency of government actions, has limited the flow of economic benefits from



wildlife tourism back to the local community. Examples from Zimbabwe and Kenya reveal that the stakeholders' (government and park management) favourable support for commercialising tourism led to marginalising the local community (Akama & Kieti, 2007; Buzinde et al., 2014; Novelli & Humavindu, 2005). Many scholars agree that management issues in PA tourism are largely due to a lack of coordination among government institutes and a top-down decision-making process (Châu et al., 2019; Hannam, 2005; Paudel, 2016; Sinha et al., 2012).

### **Power relationships between stakeholder groups**

The third group of political ecology research focuses on power relationships between stakeholder groups in PA tourism. In achieving sustainable management of PA tourism, stakeholders with equal power require sufficiently distributed authority (Jamal & Stronza, 2009). Rastogi et al. (2010) conducted a stakeholder analysis of PA tourism in Corbett National Park, India, evaluating its relationships, relative importance, and power. Rastogi's research highlights the need for need for improved information sharing and knowledge levels to mitigate conflicts between PA management and other stakeholders. According to Bello et al. (2017), administrative, financial, political, and planning power are centralised in developing countries, but clear distribution of power can better secure community participation.

### **Community-based planning for environmental conservation**

Other political ecology researchers of PA tourism have explored community-based planning for environmental conservation and related power relations. Brockington et al. (2008) looked at the political ecology of biodiversity conservation in PAs in different contextual settings and related social impacts of tourism: conflicts over the PA boundary, poverty, and power of local communities. Few (2002) studied the role of power and actors of political ecology in community-based PA planning in Belize and elaborated on how the stakeholder approach facilitates environmental decision making towards the desirable change. Among these studies, some scholars tried to select one specific approach to the political, ecological study in their research. For instance, Patterson and Rodriguez (2004) adopted a scale-based approach to study the political ecology of wildlife tourism at the domestic, transnational, and international scales. They focused on marine wildlife tourism in Dominica and analysed the role of social capital at the domestic scale.

Empirical studies that have adopted the political ecology approach are relatively limited in the tourism and PA tourism fields (Douglas, 2014; Nepal et al., 2016; Thompson-Carr,

2016). Recent PA tourism research that has adopted the political ecology approach mainly covers community marginalisation (Holroyd, 2016), power relationships (Bello et al., 2017), government weaknesses (Koot & Hitchcock, 2019), and participatory conservation (Brockington et al., 2008). Thus, these studies have addressed only three of the five dominant themes of political ecology: degradation and marginalisation, conservation and control, environmental conflicts, and exclusion. Clearly, there is room for more research in this field, particularly research that addresses the remaining two themes of political ecology: ecological subjects and identities and political objects and actors.

The initial three themes primarily address political ecology issues, while the last two themes focus on the necessary considerations for implementation of community-based sustainable tourism – and it is these last two themes that are currently lacking in PA tourism literature. The case study research presented in this thesis fills this gap in the literature. The research finds the potential environmental actors within the Ranakeliya community and highlights their willingness to participate in and support environmental conservation. The research also identifies what stakeholder support is needed to empower these actors to achieve the NP's conservation goals. Thus, the research addresses the two themes of political ecology – ecological subjects and identities, and political objects and actors – that have been identified as missing in the extant literature on PA tourism. This doctoral study aims to enrich the existing body of knowledge by forming a new intersection among the CCF, stakeholder theory and political ecology, to manage PA tourism and achieve the desired outcome of sustainability. The significance of this intersection lies in its ability to seek ways to manage PA tourism effectively based on empirical evidence in a NP setting, leading to the desired outcomes of sustainable community development and conservation.

## **2.5 National parks and protected area tourism in Sri Lanka**

Sri Lanka's geomorphological structure has created different climatic zones, which has resulted in more than seven different types of natural forests and considerable biological diversity. Many scholars assume that the earliest wildlife sanctuary in Sri Lanka, called 'Mihinthalē', could be the world's first sanctuary as it had continuous records from 246 BC. The sanctuary represents the Buddhist philosophical teaching of non-violence *towards* animals (Cummings, 2006; Ranwala & Thushari, 2012; Senevirathna & Perera, 2013). In the 2nd century AD, King Kirthi Nissanka Malla, in the Polonnaruwa period,

made a stone inscription at Ruwanveli Dagaba in Anuradhapura by ordering citizens to protect the wildlife:

... ordered by the beat of drum that no animals should be killed within a radius of seven gaus (an ancient measurement of distance) from the city (Anuradhapura), the king gave security to animals. He also gave security to the fish in the 12 great tanks. He commanded not to catch birds and so gave security to birds. (Withanage, 2001, p. 1)

The legal and regulatory environment for PAs stems from the British colonists. Since their arrival in Sri Lanka in 1796, the British had been intensely hunting the native wildlife. So much so that in 1872, William Henry Gregory, the then governor of the island, introduced the historical Bill of Wildlife Preservation. Later, in 1889, further legal actions were taken to protect flora and fauna by the Conservator of Forests, Colonel Clark. Clark's successor, Mr A. F. Broun, continued his predecessor's conservation efforts with the release of two ordinances to prevent "the wanton destruction of elephants, buffaloes and other game" and to impose an export duty on horns. Not long after, in an effort to combat the intense hunting of the British colonists, the Ceylon Game Protection Society, today known as the Wildlife and Nature Protection Society of Sri Lanka, was formed in 1894. It was the Ceylon Game Protection Society who pushed the government to increase the country's protected areas and appoint a responsible person to care for the wildlife (Uragoda, 1994).

In 1889, upon the recommendation of the Ceylon Game Protection Society, the first sanctuary in Asia in modern times was declared – and so Yala became the country's first PA. Due to this significant initial achievement, the Society continued to declare sanctuaries throughout the island, and later many of them were upgraded to NPs (Uragoda, 1994). The Wildlife Conservation Department was established in 1949, and afterwards, there was an expansion in the number of designated wildlife PAs. Yala and Wilpattu were declared reserves under the forest ordinance, and the two areas were named NPs in 1938.

Today, two departments are involved in administrating PAs in the country: the Forest Department (FD) and the Department of Wildlife Conservation (DWC). The management of protected areas in Sri Lanka is formally regulated by three main legislations: the Forest Ordinance, the National Heritage Wilderness Areas Act, and the Flora and Fauna Protection Ordinance (Rodrigo, 2020c). The FD oversees areas governed by the first two legislations, whereas those protected under the Flora and Fauna Protection Ordinance are

managed by the DWC. DWC reserves cover 1,258,997.55ha (19.25%) of the total land area of the island with 25 NPs, three strict natural reserves, nine nature reserves, two jungle corridors, one marine national park and 69 sanctuaries (Department of Wildlife Conservation, 2024). Recent information about the land area governed under the FD is unavailable in published resources (see Forest Department, 2024) with the last available information in 2010 showing that FD covers approximately 13.5% from the total land area in Sri Lanka (818,018ha) with one National Heritage Wilderness Area, 65 Conservation Forests, 366 Other Reserved Forests and 79,941ha of Forest Plantations (Senevirathna & Perera, 2014).

All most all the PA categories in Sri Lanka are compatible with various types of tourism and recreational activities due to PAs' recognition of ecological value. Strict Nature Reserves and nature reserves do not permit public access and only allow research and education activities with the permission of the headquarters of DWC, henceforth considered for hard (dedicated) ecotourism purposes (Senevirathna & Perera, 2013). National Parks are designated to the protection of wildlife and their habitats, as well as facilitating tourism and recreational activities while optimising their economic viability (Department of Wildlife Conservation, 2024). Both hard and soft ecotourism activities, wildlife viewing and photography, and safari rides are allowed, while cultural and heritage tourism is also part of PA tourism due to the presence of cultural and religious monuments inside the National Parks. Sanctuaries allow tourism activities without requiring any permission or entry fee. The significant number of Reserved Forests and the National Heritage Wilderness Area, such as Sinharaja under the FD, encourage nature-based tourism activities as they permit research, education, and recreation (Forest Department, 2024).

Sri Lanka is an example of a developing country attempting to develop its NPs as a tourism resource that can generate economic opportunities for rural communities and broader national economic benefits (SLTDA, 2017). Community perception of the impacts of tourism is important when developing PA tourism in rural destinations because it is the local community who are the hosts and who welcome tourists to their hometown. However, the community perception on PA tourism impacts is understudied area in Sri Lanka, and a study has identified involvement, trust, acceptance, and support as necessary factors to sustain PA tourism in Sri Lanka (Hettiarachchi, n.d.). The local community's perception of PA tourists and PA tourism can be ascertained through an examination of how locals define the impacts of PA tourism from their point of view (Mutanga et al.,

2017). If the local community shows their satisfaction, that reflects the positive economic, sociocultural, and environmental benefits that the community is gaining through tourism.

An airport survey of international visitors showed that most tourists visit Sri Lanka for its natural attractions (Ministry of Economic Development, 2010). Demand from international and domestic visitors to experience the natural and heritage sites in Sri Lanka is rapidly growing (Aslam & Awang, 2015; Fernando & Meedeniya, 2009,). Sri Lanka recorded its highest number of international tourist arrivals in 2018, and they brought with them an estimated foreign exchange income of USD4.4 billion. Table 2.1 shows that wildlife parks are the most prominent foreign visitor attractors and the second-largest income generator after the cultural triangle. In 2018, the cultural triangle, which includes three destinations – Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa and Kandy – earned more than all the 20 wildlife parks offered for tourist visits in the country, including Yala (SLTDA, 2018).

**Table 2.1 Number of international tourists visiting Sri Lanka’s different attractions and revenue from sale of tickets in 2018**

<b>Tourist Attractions</b>	<b>Number of Foreign Tourists</b>	<b>Foreign Income (USD)</b>
Cultural triangle	979,171	26,246,875
Wildlife parks	1,100,435	13,365,315
Zoological gardens	373,106	4,367,759
Botanical gardens	463,695	4,208,927
Museum	85,551	475,216

*Source:* SLTDA (2018).

Figure 2.2 depicts the growth of foreign visitors and revenue related to PA tourism in the post-war period. The country’s civil war ended in 2009, and the number of international wildlife tourists almost doubled the following year, indicating the resilience of the wildlife tourism market. Foreign visitors spend more than domestic visitors. However, when considering the impacts of tourism, the number of domestic visitors is very significant, because 1,610,788 domestic visitors were recorded in 2018, which is more than three times greater than the 500,000 foreign visitors recorded that same year (SLTDA, 2018).

**Figure 2.2 Growth of foreign visitors and revenue (Rs) of NP after the war period in Sri Lanka**



Source: SLTDA (2020).

In 2008, the domestic visitors only provided USD456,740 in income, which is 30 times less than the income brought in by the foreign tourists by 2018. Between 2008 and 2018, the number of foreign tourists who visited Sri Lanka's NPs increased by a factor of 20, while the income they generated increased 25-fold. NPs are essential assets for PA tourism, but the challenge is balancing the desire to create local economic development through tourism development while also pursuing the core role of NPs to sustain sensitive environments and protect biodiversity.

The increase of foreign and domestic visitors to the wildlife parks generates income from the park tickets and provides a massive source of income in the neighbouring areas where the local community lives. The government knows how much revenue is generated from selling ticket entries into its NPs, but there is no record of visitor expenditure per PA tourist in the NPs' neighbouring areas. This gap in the literature is addressed in this research study, as it explores the economic impacts of PA tourism on the local community. Furthermore, the research does not limit itself to only financial gain – it also explores the sociocultural impacts of PA tourism on the local community.

The local community can extend the PA tourism experience by adding a cultural dimension to the tourists' visit. And in so doing, the community's cultural value can bring

strong economic benefits to rural communities. In PA tourism, one of the roles of the local community is also to act as guardians of the PA through active participation in the conservation process while also gaining benefits from PA tourism (Duminduhewa et al., 2020). Buultjens et al. (2017) argue that the local community will support wildlife tourism and sustainability if benefits are available to them in return. There is a need to return the economic value of PA tourism to the local community without overwhelming them with too many visitors. Several scholars have suggested that Sri Lanka needs to attract ‘quality tourists’ rather than planning to increase the number of tourists (Buultjens et al., 2017; Duminduhewa et al., 2020).

Tourists’ satisfaction with their experience of visiting Sri Lankan NPs may be reduced due to various factors (Buultjens et al., 2005; Senevirathna & Perera, 2013). Prakash et al. (2019) discovered the main reasons for visitor dissatisfaction in five highly visited NPs in Sri Lanka (including Yala) are related to park management issues like poor visitor management (e.g., overcrowding, and poor driving), lack of wildlife views, quality of guides, and inadequate infrastructure facilities inside the park. Buultjens et al.’s study in 2017 highlighted that the negative environmental impacts of tourism reduce the amenity value for guests in many Sri Lankan NPs.

Sri Lankan wildlife parks are a significant attraction for international and domestic tourists, but the high volume of visitors can result in several critical challenges, such as crowding, heavy vehicle traffic and disturbance of animal behaviour (Newsome, 2013; Weerasinghe et al., 2023). Karunarathna et al. (2017) study based on two NPs (Horton Plains and Yala) identified that a high volume of vertebrate species is threatened by traffic (road killing) and eight out of nine species are either threatened or endemic to the NPs. Increased road killings occur due to many vehicles accessing the roads around a park’s border and irresponsible drivers exceeding the speed limits. Another study based on Udawalawa NP in Sri Lanka revealed that the elephants’ behaviour indicates significant stress and aggression in the presence of tourists, during close encounters with tourists, and due to vehicle noises, especially during the elephants’ feeding time (Ranaweerage et al., 2015).

At the same time, proximate communities suffer from challenges associated with the establishment of NPs and tourism development within the PAs, including seasonal human–elephant conflict, a lack of economic reward and limited community participation (Fernando et al., 2005). Duminduhewa et al. (2020) highlighted the value of local

community and cultural appreciation in wildlife tourism destinations in Sri Lanka and suggested that the absence of authentic local experiences is resulting in a lack of benefits flowing to the local community and high external leakages.

Hettiarachchi (n.d.) emphasises the need for scientific research on ecotourism in Sri Lankan wildlife parks before environmental deterioration and socioeconomic issues intensify. Duminduhewa et al. (2020) studied the demand for responsible tourism in Yala PA and found that the demand for responsible tourism is very high. Yet, an in-depth study is needed to showcase how responsible tourism can be established with the collaborative participation of every stakeholder group. Sumanapala and Wolf (2020, 2022) claim that Sri Lanka had unsustainable wildlife tourism practices before COVID-19, and the pandemic was a temporary relief from the negative environmental impacts from the management point of view. However, the local community's point of view on unsustainable PA tourism practices were understudied in the Sri Lankan context even before the pandemic, let alone since.

Community participation in PA conservation began in the 1930s in Sri Lanka as a potential solution for PA-related conservation issues, and the initial focus paid for forest replanting in chena areas with the participation of local people (Forest Department, 2022). The second stage of participatory conservation began in 1990 with the financial support of the Asian Development Bank and developed countries like Australia. The primary focus of the second stage was to reduce poverty in neighbouring communities and their dependency on PAs for their livelihood. Currently, 176 sites and over 23,000 ha of forest are covered by community forest management projects, which engage more than 90,000 people from 10,000 households (Forest Department, 2022).

After 2000, participatory forest conservation programmes encouraged diversification into non-timber products and supported ecotourism-related economic activities among the local community around rainforests in Sri Lanka (Forest Department, 2022). Knuckles National Wilderness Heritage in the middle highland of the country provides the best example of successful participatory conservation through responsible nature-based tourism. It is financed by the Global Environmental Facility and aims to spread environmental awareness and fight for the sustainability of the place. Tourism in this area has enhanced the locals' livelihoods; for example, the men work as nature guides, while women earn money from selling local crafts to the ecotourists (United Nations Development Programme, 2023a). However, the growing demand for nature-based



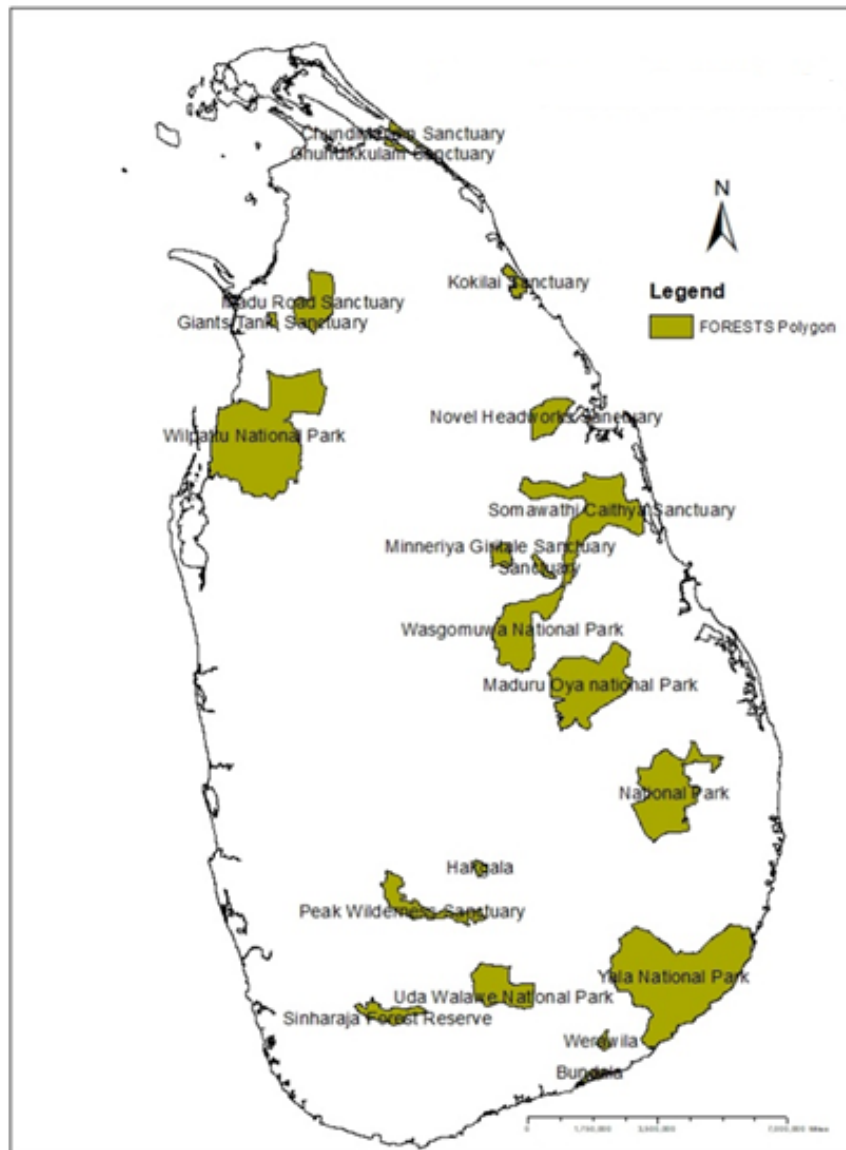
tourism in the Knuckles area has become a primary environmental concern. The locals' perceptions of the impacts of tourism on PAs need to be assessed as feedback, to monitor the volume of tourists and diversify the products on offer, which are currently limited in Knuckles and other PAs in the country, including Yala (Rettinger et al., 2021).

### **2.5.1 The importance of the community's perception of the PA tourism impacts**

A better understanding of the local impacts of current PA tourism in Sri Lanka is essential to understand the feasibility of tourism development around NPs and PAs. "PA tourism could become a vehicle that creates some of these potential win-win scenarios to reinvigorate local communities while preserving the environment" (World Bank, 2010, p. 34). As Sri Lanka is only just emerging from three decades of civil war and the post-COVID-19 related economic crisis, the country's development is lagging across various socioeconomic variables. Income disparities are significant, and pockets of severe poverty remain distributed nationwide (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2017).

The government has plans and strategies for regional and community developments across Sri Lanka, and the tourism industry has been identified as a sector that could assist with the country's development needs. Figure 2.3 shows the spatial distribution of the main NPs and PAs in Sri Lanka visited by both international and domestic tourists (SLTDA, 2023).

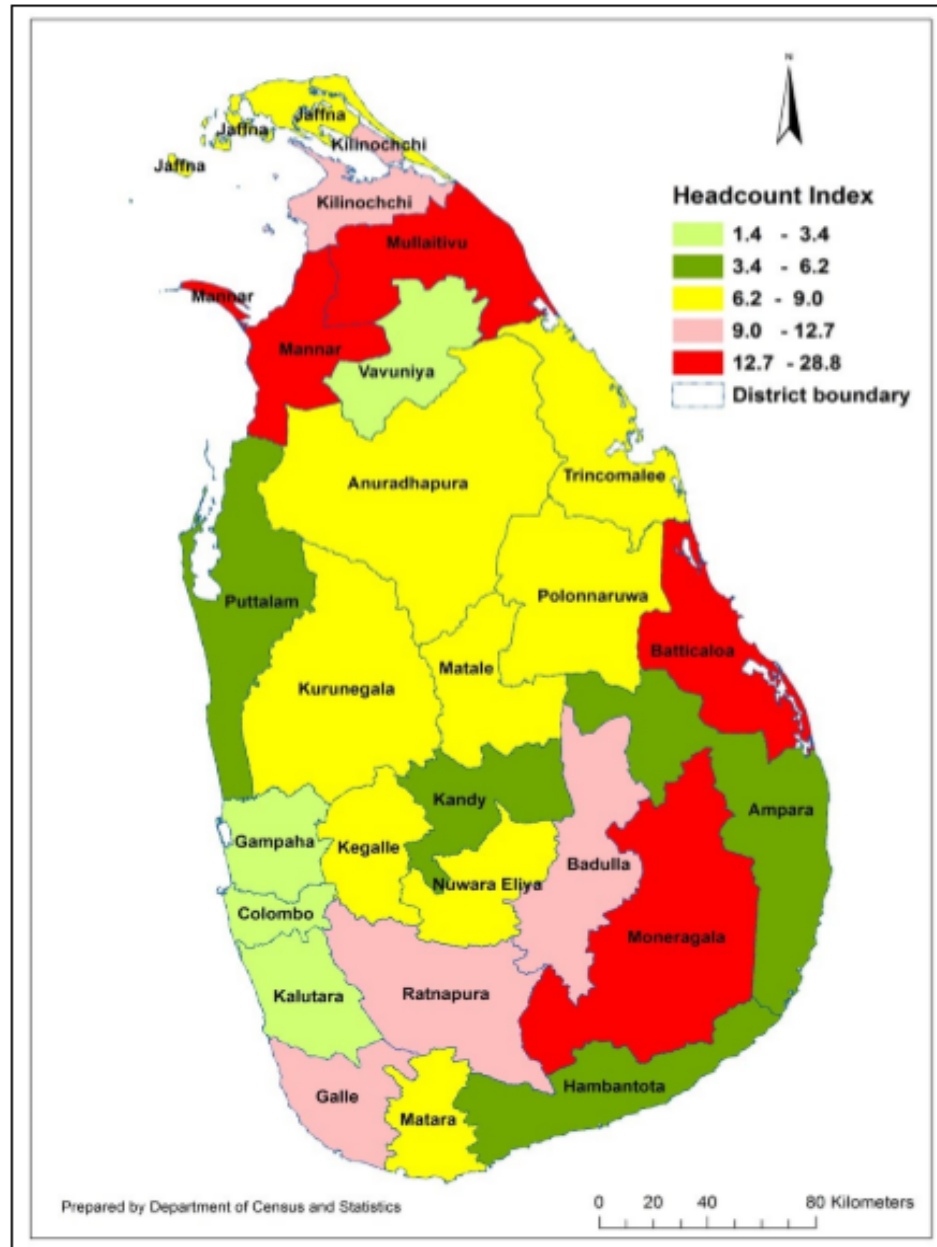
**Figure 2.3 Spatial distribution of main NPs and PAs in Sri Lanka that are visited by tourists**



*Source:* Survey Department of Sri Lanka (n.d.).

The red-coloured areas in Figure 2.4 are the districts with the most severe poverty in Sri Lanka: Monaragala, Batticaloa, Mannar and Mulativu. Several NPs are also found in those districts where the poverty is most severe. Thus, there is a strong association between these NPs and communities living under conditions of severe poverty. The potential for developing PA tourism around the NPs becomes evident when comparing these two maps, as this endeavour can aid in poverty alleviation among rural communities in Sri Lanka.

**Figure 2.4 Spatial distribution of poverty in Sri Lanka**



*Source:* Department of Census and Statistics (2017).

The research conducted on PA tourism in Sri Lanka is considerably limited in current literature. Table 2.2 shows the themes and subtopics in published PA tourism-based research in Sri Lanka from the past 20 years. These publications only focused on four main areas of PA tourism: environmental, managerial, visitor and demand-side perspectives. Management issues and visitor experiences in Sri Lankan PA/wildlife tourism are the centralised topics in PA tourism publications. The publications focused on the environmental impacts of Sri Lankan PA tourism, and highlighted the negative environmental issues caused by overcrowding (Karunarathna et al., 2017; Ranaweera et al., 2015). Several other scholars claimed that such environmental problems occurred

due to poor management in NPs or by government institutions (Buultjens et al., 2017; Buultjens et al., 2005; Powell et al., 2009).

**Table 2.2 Contemporary studies of Sri Lankan PA tourism**

Overall theme	Subtopics	Authors
Environmental impacts	Tourism disturbances, elephants' behavioural changes, conservation Vehicular traffic, animal road-kills, recreational camping, camper's attitudes	Ranaweerage et al., 2015 Karunaratne et al., 2017 Mallikage et al., 2021 Perera et al., 2022
Management issues	Government institutes' management issues, social capital, resilience Visitor management, PA management Management implications	Powell et al., 2009  Buultjens et al., 2017 Buultjens et al., 2005 Perera et al., 2023
Visitor experience	Visitation, ecotourism experience Visitor dissatisfaction, visitor reviews Wildlife viewing preferences Ecotourists experience	Weerasinghe et. al, 2003 Prakash et al., 2019 Senevirathna & Perera, 2013 Newsome, 2013
Demand perspective	Responsible tourism	Duminduhewa et al., 2020
COVID-19 impacts	Wildlife tourism during the pandemic and opportunities for the sustainability	Sumanapala & Wolf, 2020 Sumanapala & Wolf, 2022

Visitor experiences are another primary concern in Sri Lankan PA tourism literature, with researchers highlighting poor ecotourism experiences due to the negative environmental impacts of over-tourism or mismanagement in the NPs (Prakash et al., 2019; Weerasinghe et al., 2003). Some visitors complained about the wildlife viewing and the limited

knowledge of the trackers negatively shaped their experience in Sri Lankan NPs. In none of these studies did visitors mention that they had been exposed to the local societies, cultures, communities, or residents' lives during their wildlife tour (Newsome, 2013; Senevirathna & Perera, 2013). The environmental and managerial issues are interconnected, affecting tourist satisfaction, and creating a less than favourable portrayal of Sri Lankan PA tourism. Demand perspective analysis emphasises the urgency of establishing responsible tourism initiatives in Sri Lankan wildlife parks to fulfil the visitors' desires for sustainability in PA tourism (Duminduhewa et al., 2020).

Sumanapala and Wolf (2020) studied the COVID-19 pandemic's impacts on Sri Lankan PA tourism and concluded that while businesses suffered economic losses, wildlife and the natural environment have benefited from this unexpected reduction in tourist numbers. However, COVID-19 has not been all good news for wildlife because another consequence of the pandemic, with its resultant job losses and poverty, has been a worldwide increase in poaching (Mombauer, 2023). Furthermore, the pandemic has also highlighted how wildlife exploitation can lead to the shattering of the global economy by catalysing disease transmission (The National Wildlife Federation, 2023). As many authors posit, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought forth both positive and negative consequences for wildlife and PAs (Mombauer, 2023; Rodrigo, 2020a; Sumanapala & Wolf, 2020, 2022).

In the existing literature on tourism in Sri Lanka, there is a significant lack of evidence-based research focusing on community perceptions regarding the impacts of PA tourism (Buultjens et al., 2005; Newsome, 2013; Senevirathna & Perera, 2013). This research addresses several gaps in the literature on PA tourism and its links to community development. While most of the studies on PA tourism highlight and discuss one type of impact on a local community (e.g., lack of financial benefits for the local community) (Buzinde et al., 2014; Mutanga et al., 2017), this research focuses on the community dimension and different impacts of PA tourism that can result from the interactions between CC and different stakeholders. There is a general consensus in the literature on PA tourism that when tourism benefits are direct and tangible, the community will be more likely to support conservation goals (Mijele et al., 2013). This research takes existing knowledge a step further to determine how a local community receives the benefits and contributes to conservation in a PA.

## 2.6 Chapter summary

PAs are legally recognised geographic regions designated for the conservation of nature. They have interconnected ecosystem services and cultural significance, and are known for their long-term conservation value. Within PAs are smaller areas known as NPs, which possess ecological, conservation, educational and recreational qualities that make them suitable for tourism, with wildlife tourism being a prominent activity. This research focuses on the PA of Yala, within which lies the Yala NP (Ruhuna NP), known for its wildlife tourism and safari tours. The study acknowledges that Yala's PA tourism potential and ecological value extend beyond the Yala NP (Ruhuna NP).

The study identifies limited education and poverty in nearby marginalised communities as major threats to PA conservation. PA tourism is seen as a strategy to promote sustainable economic development and conservation while benefiting local communities. However, PA tourism can lead to conflicts between wildlife management and local residents in some developing contexts, potentially hindering its sustainability. Valuing local culture is essential in PA tourism, but in some cases, the local community and their culture may be disconnected from the tourism experience.

PA tourism offers significant potential to align the development of host communities with the achievement of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The study proposes using the CCF to understand the community's strengths and how they can contribute to tourism success and development. In tourism research, the CCF often prioritises a single capital, particularly social capital. There is a lack of literature on how stakeholders access all community capitals and the resulting impacts of their access in the context of PA tourism. Existing studies have tended to focus solely on PA tourism or specific interactions between stakeholders and community capitals. While some studies have attempted to analyse all community capitals using a system-thinking approach, this approach falls short in capturing the complexity of stakeholder interactions in PA tourism.

The study adopts stakeholder theory to comprehensively understand the various stakeholders involved in PA tourism and their potential impacts on sustainable development. The current literature in PA tourism studies employs stakeholder theory to explore stakeholder relationships but does not specifically examine how external stakeholders interact with the local community in utilising CC for PA tourism development, nor does it explore the community's perspective on the impacts of such external engagement.

Political ecology is also used as a framework to analyse the complex interactions between political, economic, and natural factors influencing community development and conservation practices in PA tourism. Previous studies on PA tourism that used the political ecology approach have inadequately emphasised a comprehensive analysis of CC and their consumption by diverse stakeholders in generating tourism impacts on the local community.

Sri Lanka serves as an example of a developing country trying to develop its NPs for tourism to boost rural communities' economic opportunities as well as the national economy. Pockets of severe poverty and NPs are closely interconnected, making PA tourism development a potential avenue for poverty alleviation in rural areas. Challenges faced by proximate communities in PA tourism development include human–elephant conflicts, limited economic benefits and low community participation. Additionally, a lack of authentic local experiences for tourists has led to limited benefits for the local community and high external leakages.

The existing research on PA tourism in Sri Lanka has primarily concentrated on four main areas: environmental, managerial, visitor and demand-side perspectives. However, the community's perception of impacts in the PA tourism context remains understudied. There is a significant lack of evidence-based research focusing on community perceptions regarding the impacts of PA tourism in Sri Lanka. Previous studies have discussed the impacts of PA tourism on the community but have not explored community perceptions on ways to mitigate negative effects by incorporating local knowledge. This research aims to add to the existing body of knowledge by investigating how the community perceives the benefits of PA tourism and their role in contributing to conservation efforts.

The doctoral study aims to enrich the literature by combining the CCF, stakeholder theory and political ecology approach to explore how to effectively manage PA tourism and achieve sustainable community development and conservation outcomes. To accomplish this, the next chapter presents the methodology and methods employed in this research to capture the empirical evidence within the context of Yala PA tourism concerning stakeholder engagement, CC utilisation, and their associated impacts on the local community in Ranakeliya.

## Chapter 3: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

*“Good research is not about good methods as much as it is about good thinking.”*

(Stake, 1995, p. 19)

This chapter describes the research paradigm adopted in this thesis and presents the philosophical assumptions of ontology, epistemology, and methodology. A case-based approach underpins the research design, and the chapter outlines how the case was selected and the fieldwork logistics. The discussion then presents the methods used for collecting the primary and secondary data, and the different techniques used for analysing the qualitative, quantitative, and spatial data gathered. As the research project involved human participants, there were ethical issues to be considered, and these are discussed in Section 3.4. A researcher’s background and position affect how they view the world, and I use the penultimate section of this chapter to position myself and reflect on how my upbringing, values and experiences might have influenced my field experiences.

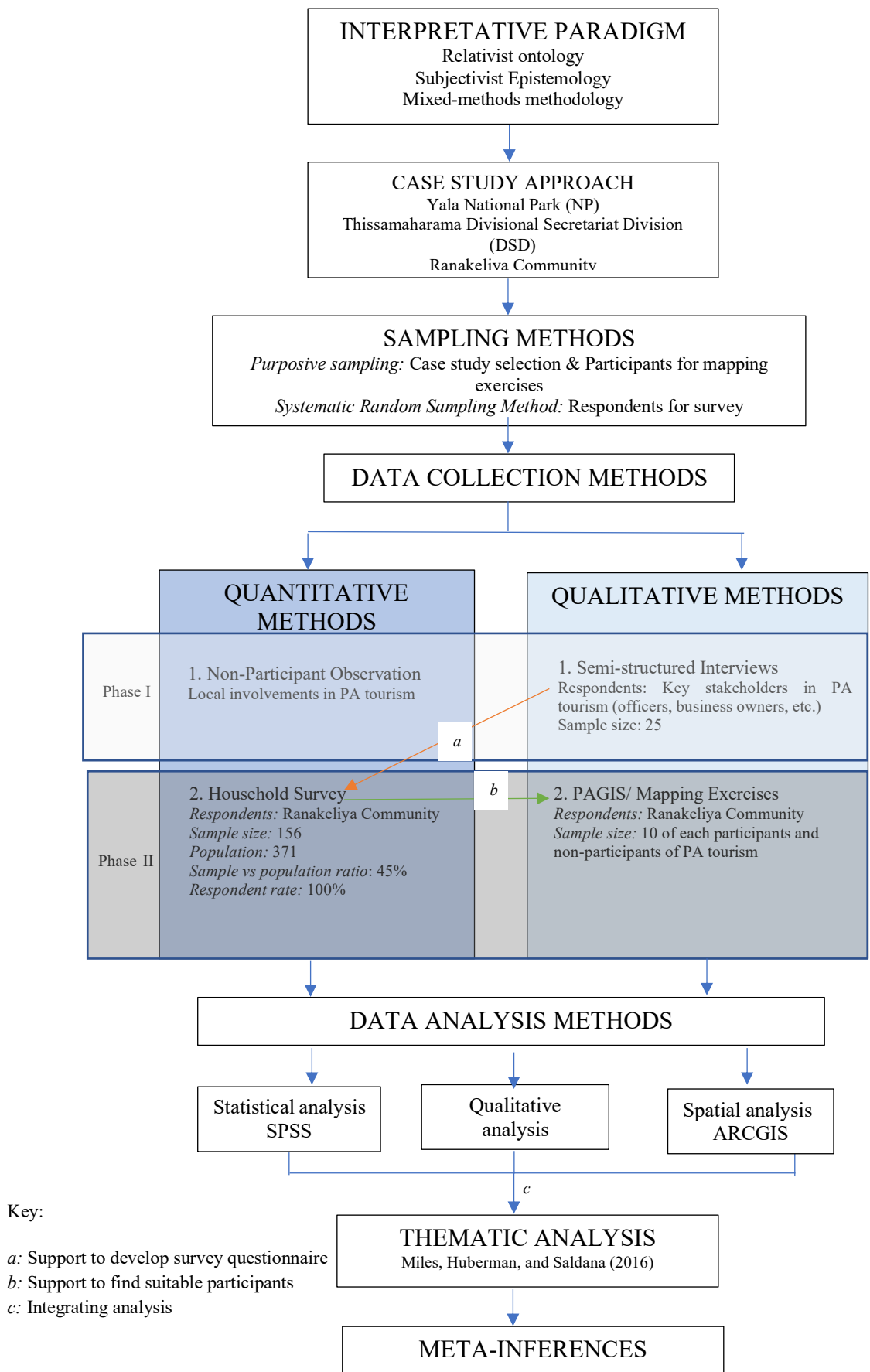
### 3.1 Interpretative paradigm

A world view or paradigm is a basic set of propositions and techniques shared by a particular scientific community that guides actions that break down the complexity of the real world (Sarantakos, 2013, p. 30). A paradigm directs what issues scholars should address and the type of explanations acceptable in their discipline (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Patton, 2002; Sarantakos, 2013). As Giddings and Grant (2007) note, any research topic can be studied, and any method can be obtained from any paradigm; however, the most important thing is deciding the most appropriate way to solve a problem and choosing the appropriate paradigm (Kuhn, 1970).

Figure 3.1 visually presents the research design of this study, including the research paradigm, case study, methodology and methods, and how the research was conducted. This doctoral research is grounded in the *interpretative (constructivist) paradigm* with an inductive approach (Killion & Fisher, 2018). This paradigm is embedded with the understanding that multiple realities exist. These multiple realities may have more than one subjective meaning, which leads to accepting that the truth is relative.



**Figure 3.1 Flowchart for the research design**



An interpretative paradigm is suitable for the community-centred nature of this study because it allows for an in-depth exploration of sociocultural dynamics within a community and supports answering the key research objectives. Several scholars argue that the researcher's background and training must be equally considered when choosing a particular paradigm related to specific research (Jennings, 2010; Killion & Fisher, 2018). In the case of this thesis, my background in human geography within the social sciences disciplines also influenced my adoption of this paradigm as it recognises the perspectives of diversity and complexity of a social context.

Creswell and Poth (2018) suggest the interpretative paradigm is suitable for studying and gaining a deeper understanding of complex situations like tourism. Jennings (2010) stressed the appropriateness of adopting an interpretative paradigm for exploring circumstances such as host/resident experiences in tourism research. This study seeks the local community perspectives on tourism growth, which cannot be captured by the positivist approach alone. One aspect of this research is benefits sharing in PA tourism, which varies according to the power dynamics of different stakeholders. The stakeholders' perceptions of tourism can also differ from contextualised notions that can best be translated into meaningful academic and practical outcomes via an interpretative approach. Therefore, this research project is positioned in the interpretative (constructivist) paradigm.

### **3.1.1 Relativist ontology**

The philosophical underpinning of metaphysics embodies the nature of being through ontology by asking: 'What is the nature of reality?' Interpretivism acknowledges that multiple realities exist in the form of multiple mental constructions founded on social and experiential knowledge, local and specific knowledge, and depend on the person who holds them (Hollinshead, 2004).

The interpretative paradigm is commonly adopted in social science, emphasising that reality is subject-oriented, intangible, and continually changing. Thus, the truth or the reality is contained in subjective meanings and should be revealed relative to temporal and spatial dimensions (Guba, 1990). An in-depth nuance of reality can best be understood through close interactions, in an explorative fashion, with the people who uphold the truth (Hillman & Radel, 2018).

Relativist scholars exclude the realistic ontology of positivists who believe ‘there is a single truth out there’. This ultimate truth is governed by natural laws or fundamental principles of the universe, which can only be determined in experimental ways (Sarantakos, 2013). Despite observing realism, relativists derive and explore the truth as a thought (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The truth in the social context is born not ‘out there’ but in human minds, shaping and shaped by their upbringing, values, and experiences. This truth is also hard to be capture and measure by instruments (like survey instruments) but could be grasped by interpreting people’s voices. Interpreting the truth means that the participants are acknowledged and empowered rather than being simply ‘researched’ and treated as passive respondents (Heron & Reason, 2006; Reason & Bradbury, 2001).

A relativist ontology is undoubtedly vital to this research as the research is based on social context. I try to understand the relationships between stakeholders to uncover the truth about the complex situation of Yala PA tourism. The anticipated ‘fact’ is created from the accumulation and synthesis of different mindsets of diverse people who represent various levels of socioeconomic status. In the context of this research, the local community of Renakeliya is a case with various levels of socioeconomic conditions.

Sri Lanka’s fluctuating political climates have influenced the truth. One example is the Easter terrorist attacks in Sri Lanka in 2019. In order to overcome the challenges of the COVID-19 global pandemic and its impacts on tourism, lessons learnt from how Yala PA tourism recovered after the Easter attacks to re-establish tourism could be applied. The truth this research uncovers represents the local community’s and other stakeholders’ voices in the case study area, but this truth comes to the readers’ hands through the researcher’s interpretation. The relativist ontology adopted throughout the research bridges the local and academic contexts, which enables the exchange of knowledge between the locals and academics.

### **3.1.2 Subjectivist epistemology**

The philosophical explanation for the epistemology of research is the relationship between the inquirer and the known. According to interpretivist epistemological assumption, the relationship between the researcher and research participants is subjective (Giddings & Grant, 2007). I tried to build a solid relationship with the participants, collaborate with them, and spend time with them in the field (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007).

The subjective relationship between these two parties can build a concrete understanding (Jennings, 2010), which is the guiding principle of investigating the truth. Interacting closely and establishing rapport with the participants helped me understand their experiences or subjective meanings to ascertain patterns (Giddings & Grant, 2007). This subjectivity is relevant to both participants and the researcher (me). The knowledge generated by the researcher from a particular sociocultural context is value laden (Sarantakos, 2013), which can create biases that influence the research outcome. To overcome any such bias, qualitative researchers usually uncover their axiological assumptions.

Tourism is a highly human interaction-based subject and is hard to study from the perspective of objectivity and positivist beliefs. Objectivists accept a single ultimate truth, while modified dualists admit the possibility of multiple truths. Relativists reject this stance and believe the truth is socially constructed. The main reason for their rejection of the positivist stance is that relativists believe that the positivist observation method may lead to misconceptions of truth and may not be able to explain subjective meanings. Both researchers and participants are humans; therefore, both researchers and participants may make human errors that can influence the outcome. Sarantakos (2013, p. 42) commented that “what is important here is not observable social actions but rather the subjective meaning of such actions.”

In this study, the epistemology is subjective. My role as the researcher is interactive and engaging, while the participants are also considered active and influential to the outcome of the research (Eriksso & Kovalainen, 2016; Jennings, 2010; Killion & Fisher, 2018). The axiological assumption of values and ethics is critical to the study. As an interpretivist, I believe the truth is relative, my interactions with the known are subjective, and I bear an emic (insider) position. My subjectivity is reflected through the reflexivity and positionality discussed later in this chapter (see Section 3.5).

### **3.1.3 Mixed methods methodology**

Methodology is defined as the science of methods and theoretical frameworks that contain the principles and guidelines for researching a particular paradigm (Sarantakos, 2013, p. 29). The methodology, shaped by ontology, epistemology, and axiology, is a study design that tells the researcher how to answer the research question with appropriate methods. This PhD research follows a mixed methods research design. While there is a debate on the definition of the mixed methods methodology, scholars agree that it is a combined

approach of quantitative and qualitative methods (Malina et al., 2011; Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007).

Even though the study is predominantly based on an interpretative paradigm, there were aspects of the study best addressed within a mixed methods methodology. Some scholars define the research paradigm by its methodological priorities, and the mixed methods approach can be identified as a comparatively novel paradigm for qualitative and quantitative approaches. The mixed methods approach provides a robust third paradigm option that frequently yields the most interesting, thorough, balanced, and valuable research outcomes (Johnson et al., 2007). One advantage is that mixed methods research allows academics to address more complex research topics by collecting more diverse and robust evidence than any single methodology can (Yin, 2018).

Creswell and Clark (2011) present four methodological decisions to guide implementation of the mixed methods approach: 1) level of interaction, 2) priority attached to different methods, 3) implementation approaches, and 4) level of integration of qualitative and quantitative methods. In my thesis, the interactions between two types of methods are dependent, and qualitative methods are prioritised. Implementation is sequential: a quantitative method (community survey) is followed by a qualitative method (participatory mapping exercise). The semi-structured interview in the first data-collection phase helped to develop the community survey used in Phase II, and this survey helped to find the possible participants for the participatory mapping exercise.

One criticism of the mixed methods approach is that it can be seen as an intermediate fashion of answering questions (Johnson et al., 2007). Another is that mixed methods studies are often expensive as a large amount of data must be collected using different techniques. In this research, I paid for research assistants who were involved in the survey data collection and provided them with food and accommodation facilities. Mixed methods research is also time-consuming, which may raise the cost of spending in the field (Chen, 2006). For example, the household questionnaire survey took several days to complete in Ranakeliya.

The large amount of data often collected with a mixed methods approach can be challenging to manage and analyse, which may lead to contradictory findings (McNeill & Chapman, 2005) that may prevent the researcher from reaching a clear conclusion (Malina et al., 2011). In this study, I collected and analysed three distinct types of data:

quantitative, qualitative, and spatial. I approached the task of integrating the data in a coherent manner while carefully selecting the most suitable approach to present the findings.

Despite its acknowledged challenges, there are also multiple benefits to using a mixed methods approach: 1) using both qualitative and quantitative methods can reduce the effect of each method's inherent weaknesses and combine the strengths; 2) mixed methods provide trustworthy and mutually confirming findings; 3) mixed methods facilitate the development of culturally appropriate instruments for collecting data; and 4) mixed methods can bring the researcher's strengths and expertise to the table (Azorin & Cameron, 2010; Bartholomew & Brown, 2012; Wiggins, 2011).

The mixed methods approach fits well with combining different paradigms because it can capture a complete and more comprehensive picture of a particular phenomenon. This approach allows more opportunities to verify the findings by generating more rich and deep data to fulfil the exact research aim and reveal further research directions (Sarantakos, 2013). Johnson et al. (2007) believe that methodological pluralism is the best approach for multidisciplinary sciences like tourism studies as it can capture the complicated nature of issues that tourism potentially creates.

This research required the use of both qualitative and quantitative data. A mixed methods approach was employed as it combines the advantages of both methodologies and provides a balanced perspective on the complex issues addressed in the research questions (Bryman, 2016; Jennings, 2010; Sarantakos, 2013). Within the mixed methods approach, both qualitative and quantitative methods have been used for data collection and analysis (Table 3.1). Non-participatory observation and community household surveys were employed as quantitative methods in data collection, while semi-structured interviews and participatory mapping exercises were conducted for the qualitative inquiry.

**Table 3.1 A summary of methods**

	<b>Phase I: Stakeholders’ engagement</b>	<b>Phase II: Community-level impacts</b>
<b>Specific objectives</b>	To identify the relationships between key stakeholder groups engaged in PA tourism practices	To understand the community-level impacts of PA tourism
<b>Methods</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Non-participatory observation</li><li>– Semi-structured interviews with stakeholders (<math>n = 25</math>)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Community household survey (<math>n = 156</math>)</li><li>– Six groups with a total of 20 community participants in the mapping exercise</li></ul>
<b>Data analysis</b>	Thematic analysis using NVivo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Statistical analysis using SPSS</li><li>– Thematic analysis using NVivo</li><li>– Spatial analysis using GIS</li></ul>

### **3.2 Case study approach**

Gerring (2007) defines the *case study approach* as “a rigorous study of a single unit to understand a larger class of (similar) units” (p. 342). Many scholars argue that this approach is suitable for analysing ground-level phenomena in an in-depth fashion and providing credible and insightful empirical data that can support various research designs (Baxter, 2016; Sarantakos, 2013; Yin, 2012). However, the case study approach also has its limitations: 1) the researcher cannot replicate and generalise the findings from a single case study; 2) there is potential for researcher bias; 3) case studies can be time-consuming; and 4) ethical issues can arise for example, when the researcher going to stay for long period of time with the case study community (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2001). Despite these limitations, the potential research benefits of a case approach include its explorative nature (Hsieh, 2004). Case studies often lead to new research directions or give new insights into existing phenomena (Gerring, 2007).

The case study approach aligns the epistemological orientation with the relativist perspective, which follows the interpretative paradigm. (Yin, 2018, p. 32) raised three ‘if’ conditions for selecting the case study approach for a research project: 1) if the main research question starts with ‘how’ or ‘why’; 2) if the researcher has no control over the behavioural events; and 3) if the focus of the study is contemporary. When these ‘if’ conditions were applied to this doctoral research project, the answers were: 1) ‘YES’: the

overarching aim or the main research question of this thesis begins with ‘how’ (i.e., how PA-focused tourism can be managed to generate sustainable community development...); 2) ‘YES’: I could not control the behavioural events of Yala PA tourism; and 3) ‘YES’: the study is based on a contemporary phenomenon. Therefore, this research has employed the case study approach as it successfully meets all three ‘if’ conditions.

A single case study that involves an in-depth investigation can yield significant advantages. According to Yin (2018), critical, unusual, familiar, revelatory, or longitudinal rationales influence the choice of a single case study. This doctoral research project has a ‘critical’ rationale. First, the use of a single case study is critical because it enables the researcher to apply and explore the intersection between stakeholder theory, community capitals (CC) and political ecology in the literature. And second, the case study represented in this research, Yala, is a critical phenomenon in the research field of PA tourism in Sri Lanka. The Yala PA is the most heavily visited wildlife park and generates the highest income for the Government Treasury through the Department of Wildlife Conservation. But even though PA tourism in Yala generates significant income at the national and regional levels (e.g., hotels and jeep operators in the Thissamaharama area), the level of poverty in villages neighbouring the PA is significant. Furthermore, primitive agricultural activities by the local communities, which lead to deforestation, as well as poaching in Yala do not appear to be reducing. And thirdly, the increased number of visitors, with consequent increased number of safari jeeps, and the mismanagement of the tourist visitation inside the NP have been the focus of criticisms that say the tourism practices there are not sustainable. Yala’s complex sustainability issues, which are both unique to the NP and also representative of and critical to the future of PA-related tourism development in Sri Lanka, lead to the consideration of a single case study. The Ranakeliya community, located in Palatupana, was selected for the single case study because of the community’s proximity to the main entrance to the Yala PA. Thus, Ranakeliya was used as a case study to thoroughly investigate and gain an in-depth understanding of the complex issues around sustainability of PA tourism.

### **3.2.1 Background to the research**

I have been intensively studying academic and media information about PA tourism in Sri Lanka since 2015. This desk research led to my identifying critical issues in the sector and guided me to develop the research questions and select the case study. Before developing the research proposal, I participated in a wildlife safari in Yala on 16



November 2017 as part of the background preparation for the research. I also had informal conversations with the park warden in Yala PA and the development director at the Thissamaharama Divisional Secretariat Division (DSD) office, which is the government administration office for the case study area. These discussions guided the selection of the case study community of Ranakeliya, and I obtained the basic socioeconomic details about the community by contacting the village officer there. The experience gained from this pilot visit was beneficial for planning the actual fieldwork.

The fieldwork was planned to start in July 2019. However, on 21 April 2019 (Easter Sunday), Muslim terrorist suicide bombers attacked three main tourist hotels and six locations around Colombo, including a few Catholic churches (Nishla & K. Rinos, 2019). Both foreign tourists (45) and locals (269) were killed, and more than 500 people were injured. The tourist flow into Sri Lanka suddenly collapsed, and an emergency was announced for a few months. People's movements were limited as regular passenger checking took place.

During that time, I was pregnant; I needed to have completed my fieldwork to return to New Zealand for the baby's delivery in October 2019. Therefore, I flew to collect data at the beginning of July and prepared for the fieldwork by staying in a hostel near my place of work – the Geography Department, University of Kelaniya (UoK) – for the first few weeks. The maps needed for the PAGIS were bought from the Survey Department in Colombo. I created some maps while using the GIS laboratory at the Geography Department; for example, zoning the Ranakeliya village map to plan the household survey. Geographical Positioning System (GPS) devices were borrowed from the Geography Department, and four recent graduates were selected as research assistants to assist me with the community household survey. One of the research assistants' hometowns was near Ranakeliya, which helped increase my awareness of the local community and so gain the trust of the Ranakeliya community during my fieldwork. The Head of the Geography Department prepared a letter to gain support from the UoK for this fieldwork, which helped me pass several police checkpoints to reach Yala, which is 265 km away from my hometown. It took over seven hours to travel to Yala due to the transportation facilities available in Sri Lanka at the time.

I rented a house to stay in near Ranakeliya for three months while I carried out the fieldwork, with the support of the chief monk of the village temple. During the first days, I met with the police officer in charge (OIC) and village officer, obtained permission to

conduct the fieldwork, and ensured the research group's safety. Apart from the chief monk and current village officer, two other gatekeepers were contacted: the former village officers of Ranakeliya and the park warden in the Yala Wildlife Office (YWO). Even though the villagers were made aware of my research prior to the household survey, through word of mouth or from fliers posted on the noticeboards at the village office and the temple, some community members had doubts and requested to examine my ID before responding. This situation is further explained in the field note below.

**Field Note - 9 pm/ 21 July 2019/ Accommodation at Welipothewala:**

Today is the 1st day of my fieldwork. Per my recommendation, research assistants were dressed in UoK T-shirts and had UoK files in their hands with bundles of questionnaires to identify them from an academic institute. The field survey should be started from the Sri Devananda Maha College school. The school's arranged security committees from parents to protect the kids during school hours due to the uncertain situation in the country. As soon as we turned to the Sithulpauwa road, one father came to us and asked me (doubtfully), "Madam, what are you doing? Where did you come from?" I politely explained our research purpose, showed our university IDs, and the Head of the Geography Department's letter and made him aware that I had got permission from the police OIC and the village officer. Then, he showed his satisfaction and apologised for questioning us. Showing maximum hospitality to strangers is a unique value coming through many generations in Sri Lanka. This custom seemed to be changed by the incident of the Easter Attack, and it showed the fear in the depth of their minds. Even though the situation was like that at the beginning of the survey in the morning, one villager who had responded to the study has arranged his home to enjoy our lunch (prepared by us) today and proved their hospitable qualities are unbreakable.

The third day of the community survey was a 'full moon poya day' and a public holiday in the country, and the Buddhists attended a few religious activities under security conditions. On such poya days, Buddhists organise accessible food stalls along the road, and the Ranakeliya community organised a free ice-cream stall. The research assistants went to help them, which was an opportunity to have closer contact with Ranakeliya youth, who supported the research work afterwards.

### **3.3 Data-collection methods**

#### **3.3.1 Secondary data-collection methods**

Secondary data were collected from various sources such as books, journals, newspapers, periodicals, reports, and websites. The libraries and websites of the Department of

Wildlife Conservation (DWC), Forest Department and Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA) helped access the above data types. I also kept in mind that scholarly books and journal articles were the most reliable sources since the government in power could influence data contained in newspapers, institutional reports, and government websites.

Secondary sources published about NP and PA tourism in Sri Lanka were collected at the beginning of the research project. Social science methodology and methods, sustainable tourism, community development, stakeholder participation in the tourism industry, community participation in PA conservation, and political ecology-related publications have been used exclusively. Further secondary data, such as government reports, were collected during the fieldwork; for example, a Research Profile published by the DSD Office in Thissamaharama, maps and unpublished documents from the Ranakeliya village office, and tourism-related information and documents about Yala PA from YWO.

A thematic-inductive approach was adopted to review extant literature and inform the research objectives and questions. This is an essential part of the research process, aiding in establishing a theoretical basis and providing a focus or context for the research. The literature review helped identify patterns and trends, enabling the identification of gaps or inconsistencies in the body of knowledge. Most of the literature referred to in this study was published within the 10 years prior to the commencement of this research.

### **3.3.2 Primary data-collection methods**

The fieldwork was conducted over two months, from mid-July to mid-September 2019. The fieldwork was designed to gather data directly related to the first two research objectives: to explore and explain the relationships between key stakeholder groups engaged in PA tourism practices, and to understand the community-level impacts of PA tourism using a case study approach. The field data collection was conducted in two phases. After completion of Phase I, Phase II started with a community household survey followed by the participatory mapping exercises (PAGIS).

#### **Phase I: Stakeholders' relationships and their engagement in Yala PA tourism**

Non-participant observation and semi-structured interviews were conducted in Phase I. The information gathered in this initial phase helped me better understand Yala PA tourism and so helped in the development of the community survey used in Phase II.

### *Non-participant observation*

Non-participant observation allowed me to gather first-hand information in community-based research (Leavy, 2017). This method is vital for mixed methods research because it allows for more natural interactions and responses (Konopinski, 2014). At the beginning of Phase I, I expected to conduct non-participant observation in order to understand tourism activities in the Thissamaharama and Ranakeliya areas and how tourists interact with local businesses and people. I also intended to observe the local community and private sector engagement in PA tourism, including the activities of safari companies and tour operators. Permission was requested from the Thissamaharama DSD office to conduct the observation. However, conducting observation was not entirely successful due to the country's volatile situation. Only a few local tourists could be observed, and hardly any foreign tourists were seen during the fieldwork.

To overcome these difficulties, I took photos, with the permission of the participants, in local businesses; for example, homestays and hotels in Ranakeliya. As I was unable to observe the usual ground reality of PA tourism and community interactions, I requested participants to express their perspectives on the pre-Easter attack scenario by inquiring about the visual and experiential aspects of Thissamaharama town when tourism was thriving. The impact on individuals who had previously worked in PA tourism was clearly visible, particularly concerning the sense of loss associated with their livelihoods. A positive aspect arose as those engaged in PA tourism were more available and willing to engage in extended conversations, unburdened by time constraints. I maintained a field notebook, which sometimes worked as a research diary as it carefully recorded the events and activities at the research site and experiences, including feelings on a daily basis, with time, date and place.

### *Semi-structured interviews*

Interviews are a powerful method for gathering qualitative data and offered me a broad opportunity to understand human perceptions, feelings, and behaviours through two-way communication (Dunn, 2010; Hay, 2016; Hillman & Radel, 2018; Picken, 2018). Surveys are considered to be the most highly structured interview format, and favour purely quantitative methodologies. Unstructured interviews, on the other hand, are more individualistic, case-by-case, detailed and produce a particularised set of findings.

The second set of primary data in Phase I was collected through semi-structured interviews. This method was chosen because semi-structured interviews combine both informal and structured formats and so provide the flexibility to gather required information in different situations from diverse participants (Jennings, 2005). This kind of interview also enables the standardisation of questions across all interviews and allowed me to preliminary coding and conduct comparative analysis across individuals or groups (Picken, 2018).

As part of Phase I, 25 semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders in PA tourism, including management-level officials at DWC and SLTDA, private tour operators, hotel managers, officials from the Safari Jeep Society, non-community-based wildlife trackers, and gatekeepers (two village officers of Ranakeliya and a park warden in the YWO). The twenty-five respondents were purposively selected for participation in semi-structured interviews, designated as key stakeholders due to their diverse qualifications. Their selection is based on the integration of lived experience, comprehensive knowledge of provincial authority PA tourism, and an intimate understanding of the Ranakeliya community. Their recognition as key stakeholders is underscored by their diverse power positions (e.g., by recognising the job titles and responsibilities) within the respective domains, amplifying the richness and depth of insights they can contribute to the study. Existing stakeholder power analysis was not employed, as this study did not focus on conducting an in-depth stakeholder network analysis but rather on identifying the initial stakeholder groups involved in Yala National Park tourism, given the current unavailability of such data. Wildlife trackers who are local community members were not included at this stage, as they were represented in later PAGIS exercises.

The stakeholder theory was applied in semi-structured interviews by identifying participants' roles and engagement in PA tourism activities, relationships between other stakeholder groups. The semi-structured interviews focused on determining the stakeholders' contribution to tourism, their relationship with community capital, their perceptions of local community engagement in PA tourism and the power circulation between stakeholders. I found the participants' contact details through official websites, and they were contacted via telephone or email to arrange a time and date to conduct the interview. The gatekeepers also helped with some referrals to other potential participants. To mitigate biases in the gatekeepers' referrals, I carefully selected the initial participants to ensure diversity of the PA tourism stakeholders. I also used other participant-selection

methods; for example, to select the policymakers, I directly contacted the Thissamaharama DSD officials to identify the possible participants.

The participants were given time to read the research information sheet and sign the consent form at the beginning of the interview (see Appendix 6 and Appendix 7). The average interview duration was approximately 40 minutes, although some lasted up to 60 minutes, while others finished more quickly. Notes were taken, and interviews were voice recorded with the participants' permission.

The population sample for the semi-structured interviews was purposive, a non-probability sampling method that can be used in both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. *Purposive sampling* is often used when a researcher needs to study people who are experts in a particular field (Rahi, 2017; Tongco, 2007). Twenty-five participants were included in the semi-structured interviews to reach saturation point (Table 3.1). This sample size also satisfied Ali and Frew (2014) statement that 10 is an adequate number for developing themes.

Ethical guidelines from the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee were kept in mind from the first contact with the key stakeholders for interview. I stayed at a hostel near Colombo to be punctual when meeting interviewees. I used taxis instead of public transportation when the interviews took place at head offices in Colombo. However, due to the volatile situation in the country at the time, I had to go through security checking and obtain special permission (e.g., from the Director-General of DWC) to enter government departments. Regardless of how early or late the appointments were, I tried to respect the time schedules of my respondents.

Researcher bias can occur when a researcher's own beliefs or expectations influence the outcome of their research. To avoid this, the first step was to identify and be aware of any potential biases I, may have. I made sure that the questions were clear, ensuring they were free from ambiguity and did not include leading questions. I maintained neutrality as the interviewer, ensuring impartiality and objectivity during interactions. Reflexivity played a crucial role as I continuously reflected on my own perspectives and potential biases, fostering self-awareness to minimise their impact. Utilising multiple data sources and data collection techniques was integral to overcoming bias. Transparent reporting was prioritised, providing clarity on the research methods and procedures employed, ensuring accountability and openness in the dissemination of findings. These strategies

collectively served to enhance the reliability and validity of the research outcomes while addressing and overcoming any potential interviewer-approaching bias.

I encouraged the participants not simply to answer questions but to discuss things in more detail, providing background information and their opinions, which allowed me to gain deeper and richer data. I thanked them for offering their time and providing valuable information. To conclude the interview, I offered a New Zealand chocolate as a small token of appreciation.

The villagers' caring attitudes towards pregnant mothers, owing to the Buddhist cultural influence, and their willingness to support university students meant I achieved a high response rate to the household survey. Most of the villagers generously offered me a chair to make me feel comfortable. The household survey respondents were not offered a gift or incentive for their participation.

**Table 3.2 Participants of semi-structured interviews – stakeholders of Yala PA tourism**

No	Stakeholders' Categories	Institute/ Business	Designation of the Stakeholder
1	Government	DWC	Executive in tourism and community project management
2			Former Yala park warden
3		SLTDA	Former president
4		YWO	An executive manager
5			Accountant
6			Community Project Assistant
7			Ranger
8			Tracker
9		DSD office	Director
10			Director
11		Village officers Division (VOD) office	Former village officer
12			Current village officer
13	Private	Yala Jeep Society	A member of the executive
14		Safari jeep	Driver
15		Large scale hotel	Hotel manager
16		Large scale hotel	Hotel manager
17		Small scale resort	Owner of a treehouse
18		Small scale resort	Owner of a holiday resort
19		Small guesthouse	Steward at a guesthouse
20		Bungalow	Steward at a bungalow
21		Bungalow	Manager of a bungalow
22		Homestay	Manager of a homestay
23		Homestay	Owner of a homestay
24		Homestay	Owner of a homestay
25	Community representative	Village temple	Monk

*Note:* \*Most private PA tourism businesses were closed.



## **Phase II: Community-level impacts of Yala PA tourism**

In this second phase, a community household survey and *participatory mapping exercises (PAGIS)* were conducted to better understand the impacts of Yala PA tourism on the local community in Ranakeliya.

### *Surveys*

Surveys collect original data about people: their behaviours, experiences, social interactions, attitudes, opinions, and awareness of events (McGuirk & O'Neill, 2016). The surveys used in this research gathered basic information about the community households in addition to the information gathered during the semi-structured interviews. Surveys are valuable data-collection tools as survey data are scalable, quantifiable (see Appendix 3 for the survey questionnaire), and easy to compare (McNeill & Chapman, 2005).

Online or email survey methods were inappropriate for this study context due to the lack of internet connectivity in this rural part of the country and the villagers' lack of understanding of how to use online surveys. Therefore, a face-to-face questionnaire survey method was selected due to its potential to get a higher response rate over a small geographic area. The information I sought through the survey was the community's perceptions of the impacts of Yala PA tourism on the Ranakeliya community.

A review of relevant literature, including questions asked in similar studies (Chaminda, 2016; Hasse, 2001; Stone, 2013), informed the design of the questions to be asked in the household survey. The questionnaire was designed to gather information aimed at addressing identified gaps from the literature review and key areas of interest. Specifically, The survey sought to gather data about the impacts of PA tourism on the local community in Ranakeliya, the relationship between the community and Yala, as well as their willingness to participate in conservation efforts managed by the park. The first day of data collection for the household survey served as a test run to assess its functionality. As this initial test run proved successful in terms of clarity and comprehension of the questions by the local community, further refinement was deemed unnecessary.

The population sample for the survey relied on a *systematic random sampling* method. According to (Burmeister & Aitken, 2012), 100 is an adequate sample size to apply different statistical analysis methods for the data collected through a questionnaire survey. There are 371 households in Ranakeliya, and 158 households were involved in the survey.

A map showing the roads and households of Ranakeliya served as a sampling frame. The sample was based on a system of intervals in the numbered population (371 households). To do this, my aim was to survey every second (every other) household along both sides of every road in order to cover half of the community. When a household was not reachable, due to the unavailability of people or their refusal to participate, the household next to it was chosen.

Babbie (2012) stated that a 70% respondent rate is adequate for a community survey. In this household survey, all the respondents approached agreed to participate – no one said ‘no’ – and so the respondent rate was 100%. The data were collected in the morning, and I reviewed the completed questionnaires in the afternoon with the research assistants. The data were entered by the research assistants into an Excel database under my close examination and supervision. Two questionnaires were removed due to a lack of information and residency issues in Ranakeliya, leaving 156 completed questionnaires for data analysis.

I conducted the survey with the assistance of four research assistants, comprised one female and three male team members. The quality of the research assistants’ work was assured by hiring people with previous fieldwork experience and I also provided them with training before beginning the survey. As part of the training, the research assistants observed the survey I conducted and practised doing a survey under my guidance. I also supervised them in the field on a regular basis for quality assurance.

The research assistants and I surveyed the local community by knocking door to door and asking whether one adult member (18+ age) of the household would like to participate. The respondents 18+ years of age are classed as adults in Sri Lanka and do not need consent from their parents or the guardian to participate in this research. If they responded ‘yes’, I took note of their answers in the questionnaire. Each questionnaire took approximately 10 minutes to complete. Despite the volatile situation in the country at that time, the survey respondents were friendly and only six requested to view IDs before responding.

The survey was conducted in the Sinhalese language. Written Sinhalese is slightly different and more complicated than spoken Sinhalese. The language on the survey questionnaire was simplified and converted to verbal format when the questions were asked to ensure the respondents understood the questions. Their responses were received

in the spoken language and converted to written Sinhalese when the research assistants or I filled out the questionnaire.

#### *Participatory mapping exercises*

PAGIS is a data-collection method that has merged the participatory approach and GIS technology. PAGIS supports gathering locals' critical awareness of spatial information in the field (Bryan, 2011; Hasse & Milne, 2005). PAGIS is appropriate for community-based research that is using participatory rural appraisal or participatory action research. PAGIS can be used for decision making and planning in tourism development, such as zoning, landscape planning, conservation, and resource management (Alagan & Aladuwaka, 2014; Canedoli et al., 2017). The nature of the participatory mapping activity that underpins the use of PAGIS fosters interaction between the researcher and the respondents (Mandara, 2007). PAGIS potentially strengthens the people's voice, empowers the community by making sense of data authority, and encourages interactive involvement in decision making that leads them to design their own future (Brown, 2017; Bryan, 2011).

PAGIS was used in this study as a tool to generate spatial information through participatory mapping exercises (Hasse, 2000; Manyara, 2007). The participatory mapping exercises were followed up with a discussion (like a focused group discussion) about the locations marked by the participants, which supplied spatial information critical to PA tourism in Yala. The mapping exercise and discussion also provided real-world evidence of the impacts of Yala PA tourism found in the research area; for example, community participants plotted on a map where the environmental pollution happens with the location of the garbage dumping site.

The target group selected for the participatory mapping exercises (PAGIS) comprised the local community residing in the Ranakeliya Village Officer's Division. The survey employed purposive sampling to identify potential participants. Initially, a community survey was conducted as an alternative to the snowball sampling method to identify suitable participants for the mapping exercise. While snowball sampling is commonly used in community-based research, it is associated with personal biases in recommending individuals (Parker et al., 2019). Snowball sampling is typically employed to reach research participants who are challenging to access, hidden or difficult to identify, such as poachers in the context of PAs. However, since this research did not involve such a hidden group within the context of PA tourism, the primary approach involved a

community household survey to identify potential participants and explore the impacts of PA tourism on the local community.

If the survey respondents indicated they were happy to participate in PAGIS exercises, I contacted them by phone and arranged a suitable meeting time and venue. In order to get a balanced perspective, 10 community members who were engaged (directly or indirectly) in PA tourism and 10 who were not were selected for the exercises. Table 3.3 lists the occupations of the 20 community members who participated in the PAGIS exercises. I allowed approximately one hour for the participants to complete the mapping exercises.

**Table 3.3 Community participants in the PAGIS exercises**

Group	Employment	
	Working in PA tourism	Not working in PA tourism
1	Laundry labourer*	Farmer
	Safari jeep driver	Retired teacher
	Farmer*	Businessman
2	Food supplier	Housewife
	Safari jeep driver	Housewife
	Restaurant owner	Dressmaker
	Airport cleaner	Schoolteacher
3	Accommodation owner	Farmer
	Accommodation owner	Development officer
	Accommodation owner	Farmer

*Note:* \* Indirect PA tourism jobs

The community members were happy to participate in the PAGIS exercises and grouped themselves with friends or people they felt comfortable with. During the household survey, I also found that grouping for mapping exercises is more effective than conducting mapping exercises individually – I had learnt that the community members have a strong neighbourhood relationship. The 10 participants in each category (those working in PA tourism and those who were not) were split into two groups with three participants in each and one group with four participants. Grouping was more beneficial than conducting the exercise individually, as the discussions between participants helped them to remember some incidents or background information related to locations. I brought a map from the Survey Department, with English place names. Even though the

literacy rate in Sri Lanka is high (93%) (Wisevoter, n.d.), I doubted the participants' map-reading skills, mainly because the map was in English. However, the participants' remarkable map-reading skills, regardless of age or education level, surprised me as they were significantly better than I had anticipated.

At the beginning of each PAGIS exercise, I gave the participants an overview of what is an interactive mapping exercise, and they then signed the consent form. The participants were provided with a large hardcopy map (scale - 1:50,000) covering the park and Thissamaharama DSD and were briefed about the process of the mapping exercise (Jankowski, 2009). To begin with, I asked the participants to identify a few locations on the map that are well-known to the participants; for example, Yodhakandiya tank, Thissamaharama town and Sithulpauwa road. Then I asked participants to identify the five types of locations where 1) the PA tourism businesses are placed; and potential conflict or tension might arise between stakeholder groups such as 2) the community and Yala park management, 3) the community and PA tourists, 4) the community and private tour operators, and 5) the community and outsiders who work in PA tourism sector. Figure 3.2 shows a participatory mapping exercise I conducted with some members of the Ranaeiya community.

**Figure 3.2 Conducting a mapping exercise with the community**



*Note:* Researcher on the left, participant's faces have been covered in order to protect their identity.

The participants were given ‘sticky notes’ in five different colours (to identify the five types of locations) to mark the location on the map. They also wrote down the place name (if it did not appear on the map) and keywords to identify why they marked it. When the participants marked locations, they were asked to explain why they marked those places, what kind of incident happened, or if they had personal experience there. These follow-up questions were asked to promote interactive discussion and share spatial knowledge to derive in-depth information on the positional data (Brown, 2017; Hasse, 2001; Manyara, 2007).

### **3.4 Data analysis**

Different methods of data analysis – descriptive statistical methods, and spatial and thematic analysis (see Figure 3.1) – were applied to answer the research questions (Sarantakos, 2013). Document analysis was used to understand the current mechanisms of PA management in Sri Lanka and in what way the local community links with the tourism industry, park planning and development through various institutional documents, policies, and plans (Bowen, 2009).

While both qualitative and quantitative approaches were employed, qualitative analysis is more dominant due to the community nature of the research topic. The data gathering focused mainly on qualitative approaches, using semi-structured interviews and PAGIS exercises, which provide rich and descriptive information. Quantitative analysis methods were only used to analyse the community household survey data.

#### **3.4.1 Qualitative data analysis methods**

The qualitative analysis aims to organise cumbersome and unstructured textual materials gathered from different qualitative data-collection methods (Bryman, 2016). There are three perspectives of qualitative data analysis: language-oriented, theory-building, and descriptive perspectives. This research used the *descriptive perspective* because it delves into the underlying meanings within or across different themes and finds connections and explanations for data interpretation. The descriptive perspective also supports the other methods and tools used for this research, like surveys and computer-based analytical tools (Miles et al., 2016; Sarantakos, 2013). Thematic analysis is considered the most appropriate method for the descriptive perspective (Hay, 2016) and Miles and Huberman’s interactive model (1994) of data collection, reduction, display and drawing conclusions and verifications was followed for the qualitative analysis in this research.



Qualitative data analysis is not a linear procedure; it is a back-and-forth process that starts with data collection and ends with data interpretation. After finishing the fieldwork, I listened to the recordings of the semi-structured interviews and PAGIS exercises a few times. The essential sections of the recordings were transcribed in Sinhalese by hand. I started manual coding based on handwritten transcriptions (Figure 3.3). It helped to prepare a coding list with inductive coding, and this was the first coding cycle in the qualitative analysis (Miles et al., 2016).

**Figure 3.3 Example of getting acquainted with the interview data**

The image shows a handwritten interview recording form. At the top, it says 'Interview recording with Yata Park warden' and 'ID No P.01'. Below this, there is a section for 'Q3: community tourism' and 'Ans:'. The answer is written in Sinhalese. To the right of the text, there are several English codes written in a bracketed format, such as 'World Bank', 'financial', 'com. forest management projects', 'The management', 'wildlife', 'Employment opportunities', and 'private sector'. The form is divided into sections by horizontal lines, and the text is written in a clear, legible hand.

The codes emerging in the first cycle were revised by defining them logically and meaningfully; for example, I gave my definition to the codes to briefly identify the quote's meaning (Figure 3.4). Then the codes were organised and categorised into a few central themes; for example, stakeholders' relationships, PA tourism impacts and power dynamics.

I translated the essential quotes from Sinhalese to English and uploaded them into NVivo 12 (Figure 3.5). NVivo supported the second coding cycle as I read through the transcripts. 'Jotting' and 'analytic memos' were taken throughout the coding process in

the NVivo software, and the ‘annotation’ option was used for jotting (Sarantakos, 2013). *Jotting* refers to quickly writing down brief notes to capture the key points, ideas, or reminders in an informal manner, while *analytic memos* are a tool for documenting and interpreting data, capturing emerging patterns, and developing analytical ideas.

**Figure 3.4 Examples of the coding system**

Codes	Definitions	Transcript examples
Household economy	Sharing a real-life experience about herself	“I was a housewife until my husband got a heart attack. He needed to do urgent bypass surgery. My husband was a cattle farmer, and we were not financially stable. Then we had to get a loan to afford the surgery. Afterwards, I decided to work as my husband could not do hard work after recovery. Now I am the chef here at a large camping site. They trained me to cook the cuisines of different countries. There are three owners [outsiders] of this tourist accommodation, and they often visit this place. They are so kind and supportive of the workers here. I have one daughter, and I could send her to a private university to become an English graduate, which I cannot afford without this job. At first, we were not aware of private universities until the owners advised.” (accommodation worker)
Entrepreneurships	Income opportunities for Chena farmers	“In <u>Bambawa</u> , the wives and children of farmers set up small frame tables along the road to sell a variety of chena products, such as king coconuts and boiled corn. This setup allows them to directly sell their products to tourists visiting the area, bypassing any intermediaries in the process.” (chena farmer in the non-PA tourism group)
Job opportunities	Community women’s employability in PA tourism	“Lots of women in <u>Ranakeliya</u> have found new job opportunities in the tourism sector. Some housewives do part-time jobs in hotels while managing their household work. Their workplaces also provide them with food and transport services for their convenience.” (participant in the mapping exercises)

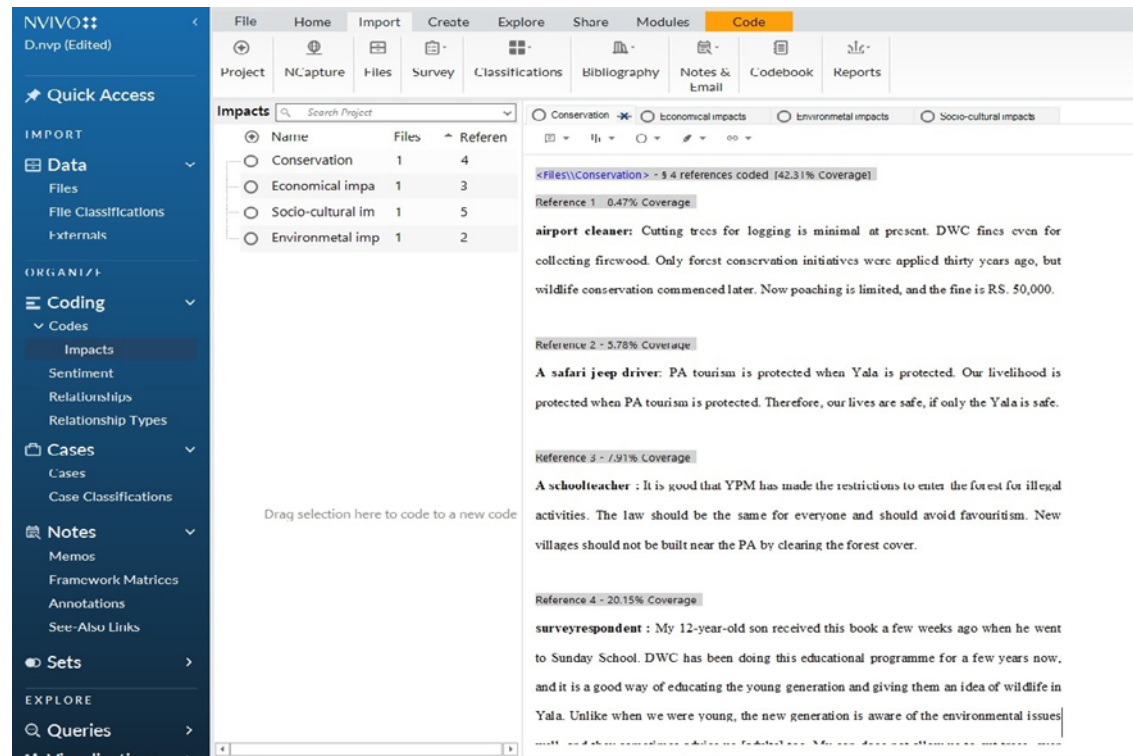
The second coding cycle is known as ‘pattern coding’ because it identifies patterns that recognise relationships that guide the data analysis (Miles et al., 2016). The second coding cycle discovered the relationships between various themes: causes and effects and links between PA stakeholders and CC. For example, what the local’s reaction was to outsiders grabbing their financial benefits. *Thematic maps* were created to identify the relationships between various themes (Figure 3.6).

The second coding cycle also revealed the findings, which have a theoretical basis. For example, information related to resources in Ranakeliya has a theoretical foundation in the CCF. The most appropriate way to interpret and present these data were then identified; for example, narrative description, matrix displaying or network display



(Hillman & Radel, 2018). After that, a suitable way was decided for writing each small finding discovered through this analysis (e.g, as an assertion or a proposition). These decisions directed the outline of the stories of Yala, which are outlined in the Chapter 7. The analysed data are displayed as text quotes, lists, tables, diagrams, matrices, and photos (Hay, 2016).

**Figure 3.5 Examples of the coded transcriptions by using NVivo**

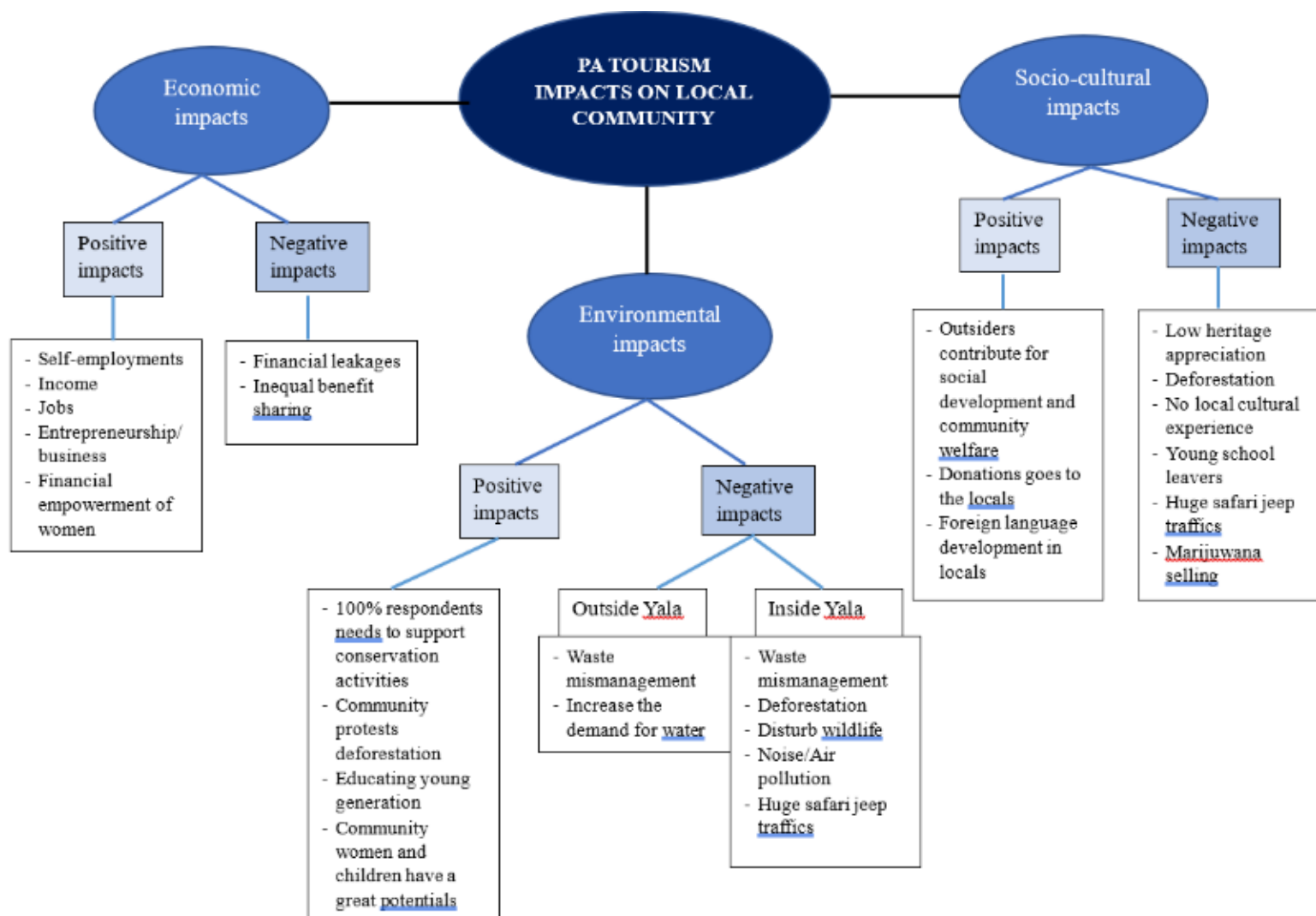


### 3.4.2 Quantitative data analysis methods

Quantitative analysis is useful for sensing the background information of the case study community (Brodsky et al., 2016). The quantitative analysis served in this study to understand the community's characteristics and profile. This understanding helped me to interpret the PA tourism impacts on the Ranakeliya community. Meanwhile, participating in the survey gave community members an opportunity to express their thoughts and concerns about tourism in Yala, thus giving them a voice for tourism.

Descriptive statistics, such as percentage calculations and cross-tabulations, were used to analyse the quantitative data from the questionnaire surveys (Taylor et al., 2010). In this research, cross-tabulation was employed to examine the frequently occurring responses received from different stakeholders on the same topic, for example, economically advantageous places in PA tourism. The correlations enabled the identification and comparison of the relationships between different variables (Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2009). Correlations were used to identify to what extent two variables are related (de Vaus, 2004; Edmonds & Kennedy, 2013); for example, the people who work in PA tourism have more positive attitudes toward PA tourism impacts on the Ranakeliya community.

Figure 3.6 An example of a thematic map of PA tourism impacts on the local community



Survey questionnaire data were fed into a database created in Microsoft Excel (Figure 3.7). The database was translated from Sinhalese to English before the Microsoft Excel sheet was uploaded on SPSS 24-version 20 (Figure 3.8), which is the most commonly used software for analysing and presenting numerical data in research projects (Matthews & Ross, 2010). The analysed quantitative data were presented in the form of percentages, frequencies, cross-tabulations, tables, charts, and graphs (Figure 3.9).

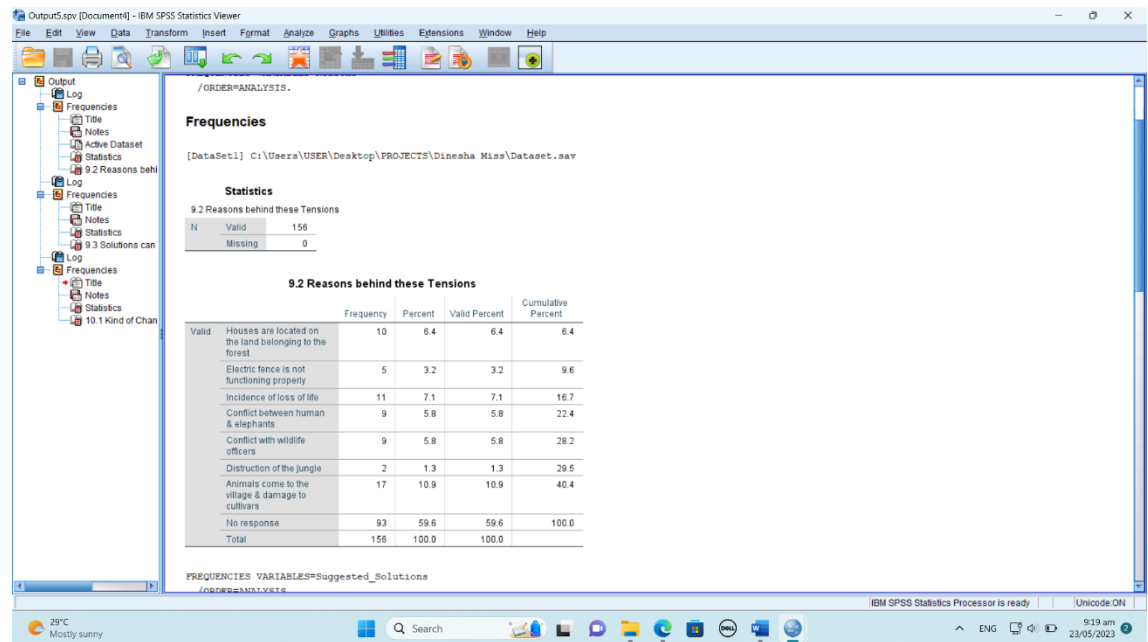
**Figure 3.7 Examples of the data entered the Excel database**

No	නම	ම	වයස	1.1 ආදායම	2.1 වෛවාහික තත්වය	3.1 වෛවාහික තත්වය	4.1 රැකියාව	4.1.1 වෛවාහික තත්වය	4.2 රැකියාව	5.1 වෛවාහික තත්වය	5.2 රැකියාව	5.3 රැකියාව	6. වෛවාහික තත්වය
1	A1	පුරුෂයා	42	ම	විවාහිත	විවාහිත	No connection	විවාහිත	විවාහිත	විවාහිත	විවාහිත	විවාහිත	විවාහිත
2	A2	පුරුෂයා	39	ම	විවාහිත	විවාහිත	Indirect	විවාහිත	විවාහිත	විවාහිත	විවාහිත	විවාහිත	විවාහිත
3	A3	පුරුෂයා	45	ම	විවාහිත	විවාහිත	No connection	විවාහිත	විවාහිත	විවාහිත	විවාහිත	විවාහිත	විවාහිත
4	A4	පුරුෂයා	14	ම	විවාහිත	විවාහිත	No connection	විවාහිත	විවාහිත	විවාහිත	විවාහිත	විවාහිත	විවාහිත
5	A5	පුරුෂයා	9	ම	විවාහිත	විවාහිත	No connection	විවාහිත	විවාහිත	විවාහිත	විවාහිත	විවාහිත	විවාහිත
6	A6	පුරුෂයා	59	ම	විවාහිත	විවාහිත	Indirect	විවාහිත	විවාහිත	විවාහිත	විවාහිත	විවාහිත	විවාහිත
7	A7	පුරුෂයා	15	ම	විවාහිත	විවාහිත	Direct	විවාහිත	විවාහිත	විවාහිත	විවාහිත	විවාහිත	විවාහිත
8	A8	පුරුෂයා	32	ම	විවාහිත	විවාහිත	Indirect	විවාහිත	විවාහිත	විවාහිත	විවාහිත	විවාහිත	විවාහිත

**Figure 3.8 Examples of the data uploaded on the SPSS**

	Hous_Ref	Village	Years_Res	Born_Raised	Reason_Migrate	Current_Occupation	Business_Involvement	Service	Workplace	Employed_Family_Members	Fam_Memb_Occupations
1	A1	Yodhakandiya 42		Yes	Marriage	Poor	Home Maker	No Connection	Manage day to day works	No response	ms'ke'
2	A2	Yodhakandiya 39		Yes	Not mentioned	Extremely G...	Entrepreneur	Indirect	Washing clothes in tourist hotels	In Home	ms'ke'
3	A3	Yodhakandiya 45		Yes	Not mentioned	Good	Home Maker	No Connection	No any response	No response	ms'ke'
4	A4	Yodhakandiya 14		No	Marriage	Good	Home Maker	No Connection	No any response	No response	ms'ke'
5	A5	Yodhakandiya 9		No	Marriage	Good	Not Employed	No Connection	No any response	No response	ms'ke'
6	A6	Yodhakandiya 59		Yes	Not mentioned	Good	Government Sector ...	Indirect	Protect Yala National Park	In Town	ms'ke'
7	A7	Yodhakandiya 15		No	Marriage	Good	Entrepreneur	Direct	Provide foods for tourists	In Village	ms'ke'
8	A8	Yodhakandiya 32		No	Marriage	Poor	Entrepreneur	Indirect	Provide timbers for constructions	In Town	ms'ke'
9	A10	Yodhakandiya 15		No	Marriage	Poor	Self Employed	Indirect	Provide service to tourists hotels	In Home	ms'ke'
10	A11	Yodhakandiya 25		No	Marriage	Neutral	Agriculture	Indirect	Sell harvests to tourists	In Town	ms'ke'
11	A12	Yodhakandiya 19		No	Marriage	Good	Home Maker	No Connection	No any response	No response	ms'ke'
12	A13	Yodhakandiya 2		No	Marriage	Poor	Working for Hire	Direct	Provide transportation facilities	In Town	ms'ke'
13	A14	Yodhakandiya 15		No	Marriage	Neutral	Self Employed	No Connection	No any response	No response	ms'ke'
14	A15	Yodhakandiya 50		No	Not mentioned	Good	Agriculture	No Connection	No any response	No response	ms'ke'
15	A16	Yodhakandiya 1		Yes	Marriage	Poor	Working for Hire	Direct	Provide transportation facilities	In Home	ms'ke'
16	A17	Yodhakandiya 50		Yes	Not mentioned	Good	Government Sector ...	No Connection	Protect Historical Areas	In Workplace	ms'ke'
17	A18	Yodhakandiya 55		Yes	Not mentioned	Good	Entrepreneur	Indirect	Provide equipments for construct...	In Home	ms'ke'
18	A19	Yodhakandiya 32		No	Other	Good	Self Employed	Indirect	Sell beverages for tourists	In Home	ms'ke'
19	A20	Yodhakandiya 10		No	Marriage	Good	Not Employed	No Connection	No any response	No response	ms'ke'
20	A21	Uddhaganad...	30	No	Marriage	Good	Self Employed	No Connection	No any response	No response	ms'ke'
21	A22	Uddhaganad...	45	Yes	Not mentioned	Good	Agriculture	Indirect	Sell fruits and veges to tourists h...	In Town	ms'ke'
22	A23	Uddhaganad...	61	Yes	Not mentioned	Neutral	Working for Hire	No Connection	Working in cleaning service	In Town	ms'ke'
23	A24	Uddhaganad...	6	No	Marriage	Good	Working for Hire	No Connection	No any response	No response	ms'ke'
24	A25	Uddhaganad...	47	Yes	Not mentioned	Good	Government Sector ...	Indirect	Working in Department of Wildlife	In Workplace	ms'ke'
25	K2	Yodhakandiya 68		Yes	Not mentioned	Neutral	Self Employed	No Connection	No any response	No response	ms'ke'

**Figure 3.9 Examples of the data output on the SPSS**



### 3.4.3 Spatial data analysis methods

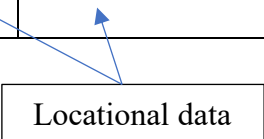
In order to ensure the effectiveness of a PAGIS exercise, it is crucial to embrace alternative approaches for GIS production and application, while addressing the challenges surrounding access and representation (Hasse, 2001). This research's spatial analysis, conducted through PAGIS exercises, examined the impacts of Yala PA tourism on the local community (McCall & Minang, 2005). The geodatabase I prepared from the data gathered by the PAGIS exercise is rich with local knowledge. The local knowledge includes ground-level information, such as the location of the community capitals, which can be used to guide the preparation of more effective development plans. The spatial analysis showed where these plans should be implemented, and the issues facing the community. Elwood (2006) noted that the sense of place associated with local knowledge, such as fuzzy emotions, and complex forms of data are hard to represent with geographic features. Such highly qualitative data captured during the discussion were transcribed and analysed through thematic analysis. The analysed data were then combined with similar spatial data and these are presented in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6.

The spatial information gathered through participatory mapping exercises was fed into the ArcGIS 10.1 software package. Five types of locations were marked manually during the mapping exercise and digitised (converted into digital format) using ArcGIS to make vector maps (Mackenzie et al., 2017). The location name and context related to PA

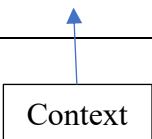
tourism was stored, and other qualitative information related to each location was inputted in the comment section (Table 3.4).

**Table 3.4 A sample of spatial data and attributes in the ArcGIS database**

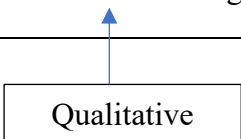
ID	Location Name	Economic activity / type of conflict	Comment
0	Yala Junction	Economic Activity	Souvenirs, fruits
1	Bambawa	Tourism-Community	Environmental issues: garbage



Locational data



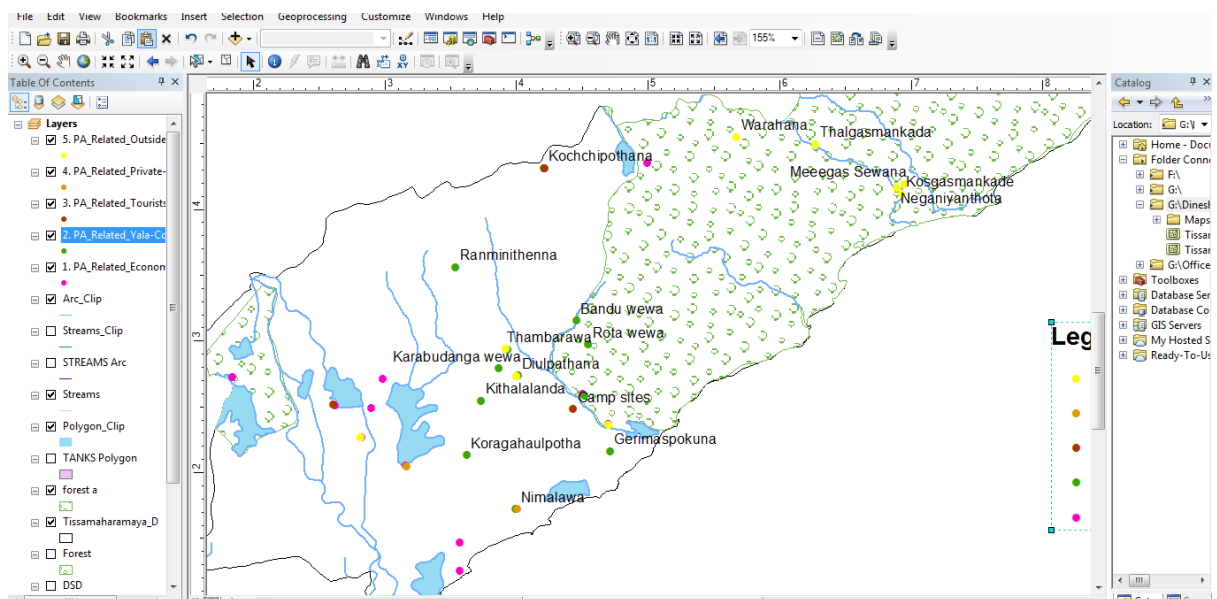
Context



Qualitative

Additional map layers covering the Thissamaharama DSD area were created to show natural features (water bodies, rivers, beaches), socioeconomic features (roads and villages), locations of tourism businesses (hotels and jeep parking places), and political boundaries. These layers could be referred to when analysing the gathered spatial data through PAGIS. These layers were analysed with spatial analysis techniques (Figure 3.10), and the analysed spatial data were visually represented as maps and interpreted by integrating the narratives found through the mapping exercises.

**Figure 3.10 Examples of the layered spatial data on the ArcGIS**



### **3.5 Research ethics**

This research project involved human participants. As a consequence, I was required to obtain the approval of the AUT Ethics Committee (Approval No. 19/159, granted on 18 July 2019; see Appendix 1) before collecting the field data. The fieldwork was conducted in 2019, before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

I respect the privacy and confidentiality of the participants. The information and the knowledge provided by the participants have been protected and managed responsibly, ensuring the participants' rights to informed consent, voluntary participation, and anonymity. Furthermore, the field data collected through various methods (semi-structured interviews, face-to-face questionnaire survey and participatory mapping exercise) have been aggregated during the data analysis process. Individual or organisational identities have not been presented in the findings.

The primary ethical consideration of the study centred on the collection of data through face-to-face questionnaire surveys and participatory mapping exercises within the households of community members. The principal concern, therefore, was to safeguard the well-being and privacy of the household residents, as well as that of the researcher and the research assistants. The design of the research ensured the protection of the participants' rights and reputations. The Participant Information Sheet (see Appendices 9 and 12) and the Consent Form (see Appendices 10 and 13) clearly informed the participants of their rights and benefits as participants. I was also willing to respond to any questions raised by the participants regarding this research at any time during the interviews or face-to-face questionnaire survey.

The questionnaire survey and participatory mapping exercises were conducted according to the Auckland University of Technology's Ethics Committee's safety protocols. Conducting the face-to-face questionnaire survey and the participatory mapping exercises in private homes came with a small risk to the research assistants and me. To minimise the risk, the research assistants and I tried to work in pairs, carry mobile phones, and a support person was kept within reachable distance if any assistance was needed.

### **3.6 Positionality**

*Reflexive research* necessitates considering how one's upbringing, values, and experiences influence what one can see and analyse (D'Silva et al., 2016). *Positionality* should be represented in two ways in social science research, especially when it is based

on a local community: the researcher's positionality, and the context of the research participants. Explaining positionality is essential because one's background and position affects how one views the world. Even if the researcher studies their own community, their socioeconomic conditions and beliefs can create a gap between the researcher and the participants. This gap could then lead the researcher to make (often unconsciously) biased research decisions or conclusions (Sultana, 2007). Uncovering and understanding the socioeconomic backgrounds of both parties minimises this risk.

I am (the researcher) a 32-year-old female lecturer working in the Department of Geography at the University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. I had approximately 10 years of experience in an academic career at the time I was conducting the fieldwork. I was raised in the Sinhala-Buddhist culture, so I speak Sinhalese as my first language; hence my ethnicity, religion and language are similar to those of the Ranakeliya community. This commonality made it easier for me to understand the local people's feelings and behaviours and to facilitate discussions with participants. As described in the positionality concept, my role in this research was close to an 'insider' (*emic*) because I had conducted the research in my motherland and have similar ethnic qualities to the participants (Pillow, 2003). However, I was not entirely an insider because this community is far from my hometown. Furthermore, my education and employment put me in a higher position than the local residents'. They respected me as I had studied for a higher degree by living overseas for a few years. I was mindful of this attitude towards me and had an equal level of respect for them as participants in my research. However, talking with them using relative titles (as is Sri Lankan practice) and accepting their invitation to have my lunch in their homes helped me build a close relationship with the community within a short period. In Sri Lanka, the usage of Sinhalese changes slightly from region to region. Once I started speaking in the regionalised Sinhalese common to the study area, I became closer to the community. Occupying the insider's role is sometimes challenging; for example, the community members tended to tell me issues that were irrelevant to the research topic or the interview schedule and, therefore, my ability to wrap up the discussion and time management was an issue.

Reflexivity is often embedded in qualitative research to showcase the researcher's experiences, which enhances the credibility and quality of the research work. Reflexivity is essential to report in the study as it ensures transparency (Holloway & Freshwater, 2007; Patton, 2002) throughout the research process. Reflexivity also uncovers the





As this study aimed to grasp the community perspective of PA tourism impacts, I had to build rapport with residents in the local community and look into their everyday lifestyles. I accepted their invitations to attend social events and activities, such as religious events organised by the Yala Wildlife Committee. I tried to understand the qualities of my research participants and let them take leadership in mapping exercises to support and empower them.

In my role as a social science researcher, I have learned the importance of establishing trust with respondents to build rapport and foster meaningful connections. This involves transparently sharing information about myself, including my background, purpose, and research objectives. I also confirm my identity with an ID if requested. Recognising the significance of interpersonal skills, particularly empathy, I aim to connect with the community by understanding their feelings and emotions. Leveraging cultural understanding as a Sri Lankan researcher, I use simple gestures such as maintaining a friendly smile, engaging in respectful conversation, and using appropriate titles when addressing participants to create a positive impression. These qualities contribute to building trust and a strong foundation for effective research engagement. Acknowledging power differences between me (the researcher) and the Ranakeliya community (the survey respondents), I work to ensure respondents feel secure about participating in the research. By demonstrating the value of their ideas and appreciating their participation, I empower them. Their willingness to support the research reflects this empowerment, as evidenced by no one declining to participate, likely due to the rapport and trust established.

The fieldwork was filled with adventurous experiences as the Ranakeliya community lives on the border of a wildlife park. The environment was challenging as the daytime was very hot and dusty at that time of the year, while protection was needed from mosquito bites at night. Some observations contained risks; for example, visiting *chenas* (slash-and-burn cultivation) through thorny, poisonous bushes; observing the garbage site Bambawa during the evenings, when wild elephants are roaming; and climbing tree huts to see the treetop accommodation. After a Muslim terrorist attack against the Christian community, the news claimed Muslims were again preparing for a big attack, this time on Buddhist villages. The media continued reporting that police patrols found swords and weapons in Muslim churches. The dogs' loud barking awakened me and brought fearful thoughts in the middle of the night. One reason for this fear was the existence of a prominent Muslim community, Kirinda, next to the fieldwork area.

It was difficult for me to contact my supervisors while I was conducting the fieldwork. Due to the civil unrest at that time, the government had restricted the accessibility of social media to limit sharing of rumours about national security. There was no internet where I was staying, so when I needed to email my fieldwork reports to my supervisors, I had to go with my laptop to the Yodhakandiya tank (an ancient irrigational reserve) to get enough internet connectivity. And even though I had initially received enormous family support for the fieldwork, a few unfortunate family events meant this data collection phase of the research ended up being very difficult for me. Despite these challenges, the successful completion of my fieldwork has actualised my passion for research, fostered my resilience, and pushed me to the limits of my capabilities – which in turn has advanced my growth as a scholar.

I firmly believe in the power of knowledge dissemination as a means of empowering participants and bridging the gap between research and practical application. The outcomes of this research will be shared through a comprehensive summary report distributed to all relevant stakeholders, including the Department of Conservation (DoC), local authorities, Yala Wildlife office, and the tourism department. This dissemination will take place after the final submission of the thesis. I am keen on personally presenting the findings of my thesis to the community of Ranakeliya, likely in the form of a simple presentation or workshop, aims to engage with the community and ensure that they are informed about the research outcomes. It is noteworthy that the community, particularly its women, invited me to visit them. I view this as an opportunity to further connect with the community.

### **3.7 Chapter summary**

This research is rooted in the interpretive paradigm, wherein the researcher aims that truth is socially constructed and can possess subjective meanings. The study adopted a mixed methods methodology, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection and analysis. This approach aimed to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the case study focusing on Yala PA and the proximate Ranakeliya community. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders to gather data on the tourism activities within Yala PA. Additionally, a household survey and participatory mapping exercise were employed to collect extensive information about the engagement of the Ranakeliya community in PA tourism and its associated impacts on the community.

The data collected through these fieldwork methods were analysed using descriptive statistical methods, thematic analysis and spatial analysis. Various software tools such as SPSS, NVivo, and ArcGIS were used in the analytical process. In order to maintain reflexivity and acknowledge the researcher's positionality, every significant step and decision made during the data collection and analysis process was adequately explained. The fieldwork adhered to the ethical guidelines and recommendations set down by the Auckland University of Technology's Ethics Committee.

Given the importance of thoroughly understanding the contextual aspects of the case study, the next chapter is dedicated to providing an in-depth examination of the case study context, as understanding the context is crucial when conducting community-based research.

## Chapter 4: CONTEXT OF THE STUDY AREA

*“The fate of animals is of greater importance to me than the fear of appearing ridiculous; it is indissolubly connected with the fate of men.”*

- Emile Zola, 1901  
(as cited in Yala National Park, 2023, p. 1)

Yala is the second-largest national park in Sri Lanka, situated in the country's south-eastern region. Yala is a well-known protected area (PA) tourism hotspot, in part because the area has the highest leopard density in the world, and also because it is the habitat for the Asian elephant. Yala is also known as the only park that is home to all the 'top seven' wild animals in Sri Lanka. It is the most visited PA in Sri Lanka, by both domestic and international tourists, and the park generates a significant revenue. However, this revenue stream also creates potential conflicts of interest between PA tourism stakeholders, and there is increasing concern about the impact the high visitor numbers are having on the environment and wildlife. Yala is the country's most pressured PA tourism destination (Hettiarachchi, n.d.). Most protected areas have dual roles; to conserve natural resources and to provide a place for tourists and others to enjoy their recreation. These two roles are often in conflict, so it is essential that Yala's natural and cultural setting are also considered when utilising such a vital biological resource for PA tourism, in line with conservation objectives.

Understanding the comprehensive background information about the case study of Yala is essential because the context encompasses both physical and human geographical factors that directly influence the effective management of the park. This knowledge facilitates in formulating sustainable strategies and policies to address challenges related to PA tourism, conservation, and community development within and beyond the NP's boundaries.

This chapter outlines the context of the study area, which covers three geographical locations: Yala, Thissamaharama and Ranakeliya. The first section presents Yala's physical geographic features, such as location, climate, and vegetation. The second section outlines the human geographic characteristics of the area, and includes cultural, political, population and employment information. The final section overviews the infrastructural facilities and local community involvement in PA tourism in the study area.

## **4.1 Physical geographic characteristics**

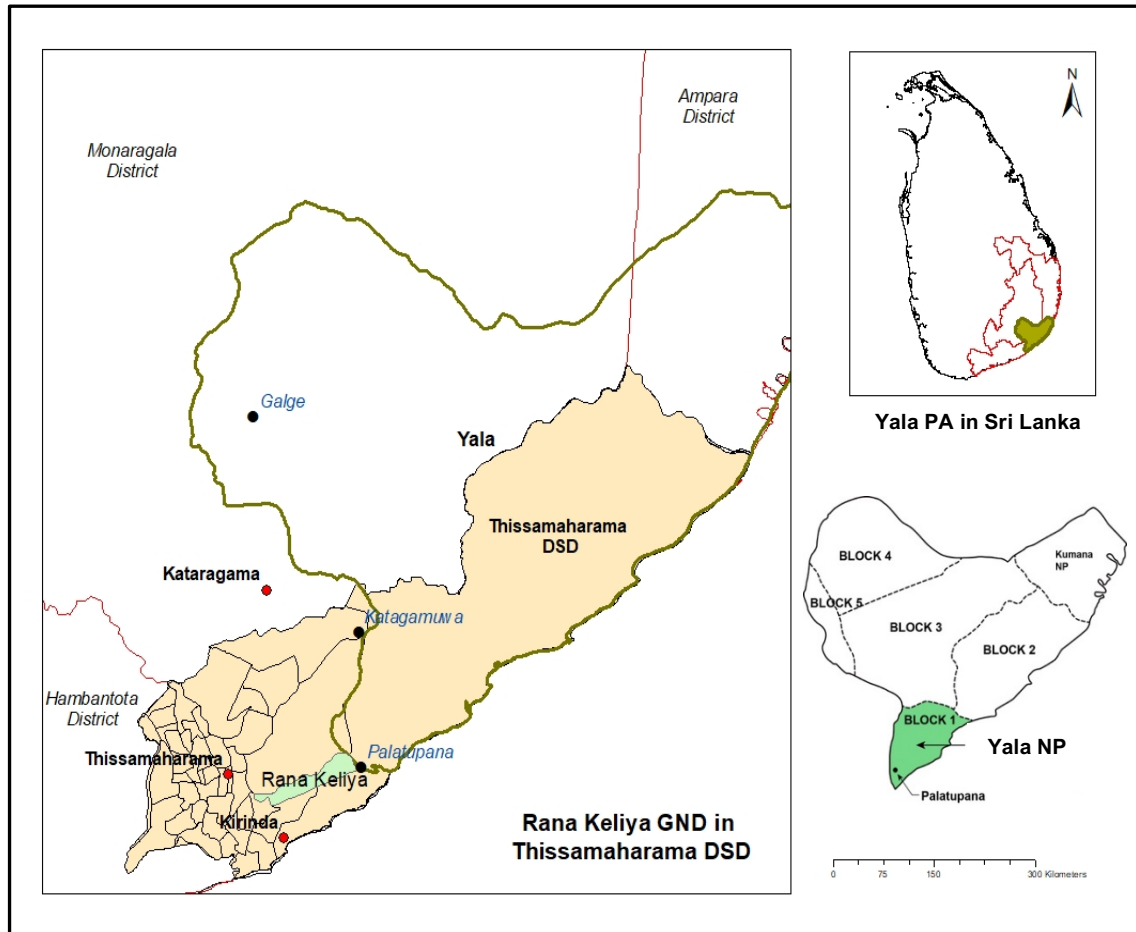
### **4.1.1 Location and boundaries**

The single case study of this research includes three geographical areas in close proximity and the key stakeholder groups within these geographical areas. The three areas (with the key stakeholders in brackets) are: 1) Yala PA (Park management); 2) Ranakeliya Village Officer's Division (VOD) at the community level (local employees and the local community); and 3) Thissamaharama Divisional Secretariat Division (DSD) at the key stakeholders' level (regional level policymakers and tourism service providers).

Before continuing with a review of the characteristics of the case study area and setting, it is useful to present an overview of the hierarchy of the administration regions of Sri Lanka to understand what VOD and DSD are. At the subnational level are eight provinces made up of 25 districts. A Divisional Secretariat Division (DSD) is an administrative unit at the district level which delivers government services to citizens; it can be thought of as a district sub-unit. Each DSD is responsible for anywhere between 20 and 40 Village Officer's Divisions, or VODs. A VOD is a minor political boundary encompassing three to five villages, depending on the size of the population contained. Below the VOD sit individual villages.

The focus of the research, Yala Protected Area, is distributed over three districts, which belong to three different provinces in Sri Lanka. It has one coastal border, along the southeastern side. As the land within Yala PA is under different political administrations – three provincial councils and three district secretariats – PA tourism-related land use planning is complicated as approvals are required from several government institutions. In this study, the stakeholders of Yala PA tourism are identified at the Thissamaharama DSD level, where the various stakeholders of PA tourism live, work, and own businesses. At the community level, one VOD – Ranakeliya – was selected to investigate the impact of PA tourism on sustainable community development. Ranakeliya was chosen because of its proximity to the main entrance of Yala, named Palatupana. The case study community is spread over 1416 hectares of Ranakeliya VOD and includes three villages: Yodhakandiya, Koralaha Ulpota and Bambawa (Thissamaharama DSD, n.d.). The locations of the Yala, Thissamaharama DSD and Ranakeliya VOD are shown in Figure 4.1.

**Figure 4.1 Location of Yala PA, and Ranakeliya VOD in Sri Lanka**



*Source:* Map created by the researcher using Arc GIS 10.5 software and Sri Lankan Survey Department data (retrieved June 13, 2023).

#### **4.1.2 Climate and land use**

The climate of this area fits within dry and semi-arid zone categories. This area receives 1,000–1,800mm of annual rainfall, mainly from the north-eastern monsoon between December and February, and the average yearly temperature is 30°C (Department of Meteorology Sri Lanka, 2020). June to September are the most arid months, and the area is frequently exposed to severe drought. When the rain is limited, wild animals suffer from limited water sources, and elephants especially come to the agricultural lands searching for food due to the scarcity of their natural foods in the forest (Thissamaharama DSD, n.d.). During the dry months, the bushes are covered by reddish dust, and the aesthetic appeal is lacklustre in Yala. Therefore, Yala is not an ideal destination for PA tourists during the dry months of the year. Figures 4.2 and 4.3 show the difference in vegetation during the dry and rainy seasons in Yala.



**Figure 4.2 Appearance of the vegetation in Yala during the dry season**



*Photo credit:* <https://www.go4safari.com/yala-national-park.php>

**Figure 4.3 Appearance of the vegetation in Yala during the rainy season**



*Photo credit:* <https://www.yalasafariholidays.com/faqs-yala-national-park.php>

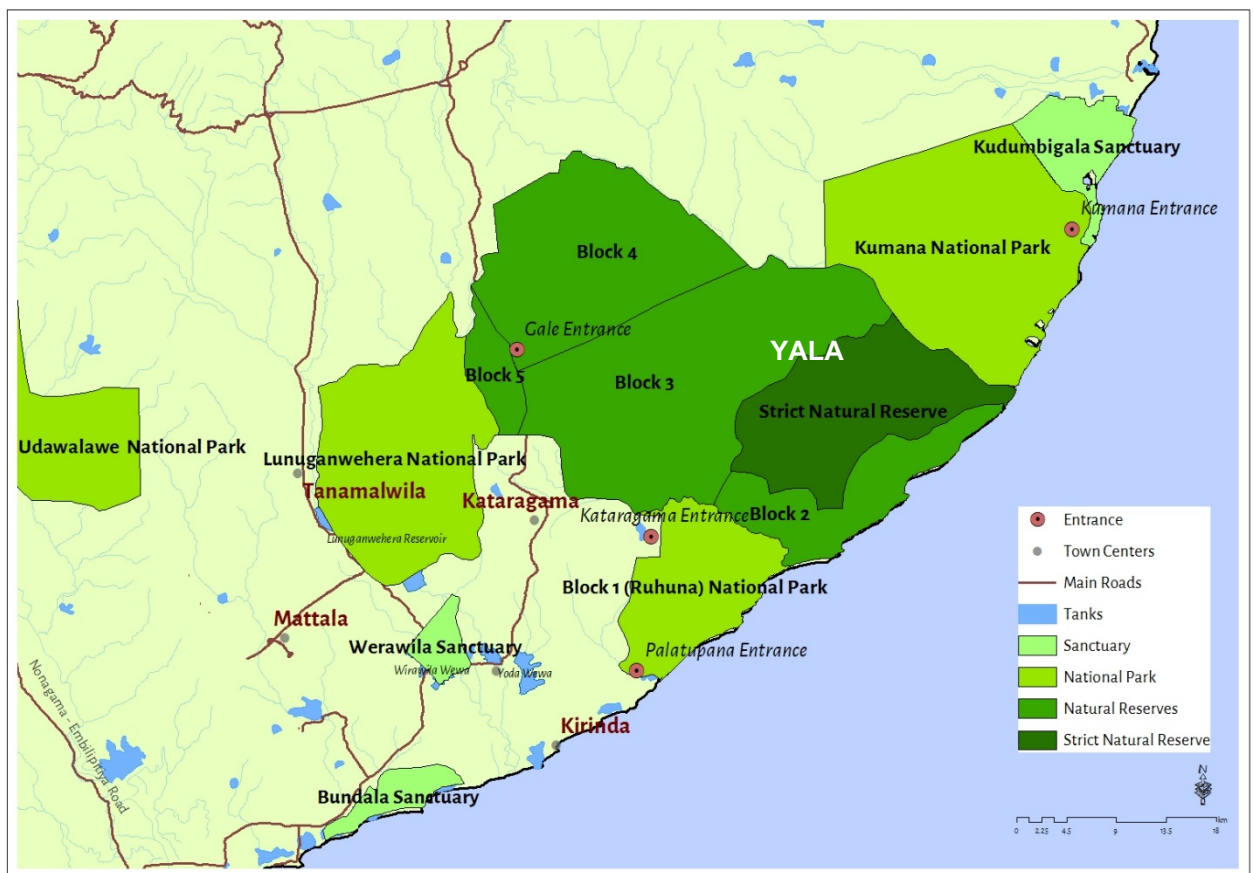
The study area's land usage can be described as mainly agricultural, hydrological and conservation lands. The agricultural land is mainly covered with paddy, chena and livestock, whereas the land used for hydrological purposes consists of channels and reservoirs. The PA lands vary from dry monsoon forests to semi-deciduous forests, thorn shrubs, grasslands, marine wetlands, and mangroves (Department of Wildlife Conservation, 2020). Vegetation cover is characterised by an open forest providing habitat for large terrestrial mammals. Biodiversity is rich in Yala owing to these different



ecosystems, which need careful conservation initiatives. Tourists can watch and learn about the flora and fauna of these ecosystems during their safari tour.

There are well-known NPs and sanctuaries close to each other in this area. The NPs are Yala, Udawalawa, Lunugamvehera and Kumana (Figure 4.4). Bundala, Werawila and Kudumbigala are sanctuaries. Elephants move through these parks to find water and food during the dry season, as no wildlife corridors exist. Yala and Udawalawa are famous for watching megafauna, while Bundala and Kumana are famous for bird watching. Of all these parks, Yala is quite dominant in terms of both its size and the number of tourists it receives (SLTDA, 2017).

**Figure 4.4 Protected areas around the study area**



Source: Forest Department (2022).

#### 4.1.3 Yala Protected Area

##### *Zones and services in Yala*

Yala has different zones (blocks) for management purposes. Yala protects around 130,000 hectares of land, divided into six blocks, including a strict natural reserve (Yala National Park, 2022). Only two blocks – Blocks 1 and 2 – are open to the public and

permit tourist activities. Block 1, call Yala National Park and also refer as Ruhuna National Park and, is open for daytime regular visitors (see Figure 4.4) because the wild animals are plentiful and easily visible there. Tourist accommodation facilities are available in Block 2 to serve overnight visitors.

Yala offers several significant environmental, cultural, and economic features. This PA protects biodiversity and conserves more than eight ecosystems and habitats (Yala National Park, 2022). There are 101 terrestrial and 27 aquatic birds among the domestic bird types in Yala (International Expeditions, n.d.). This PA is also located on the October–April migration route for 26 types of migrant birds.

Yala is the only place in Sri Lanka where all the top seven wild animals (elephant, leopard, sloth bear, black-necked stork, saltwater crocodile, leatherback turtle and blue whale) can be seen (Department of Wildlife Conservation, 2020). As there are coastal viewing areas within Yala PA, the tourists potentially can enjoy the sight of blue whales. In Block 1 there is, on average, one leopard per square kilometre, which is the world’s highest leopard densities. Between 450 and 500 elephants live in Yala and they often roam in Block 1 (Yala National Park, 2022). In all the major animal groups (except snails), there are significant numbers of species that are endemic to Sri Lanka, emphasising this PA's significant conservational value. Table 4.1 presents an overview of the animals and endemic species seen in Yala.

**Table 4.1 Fauna and endemic species in Yala**

	<b>Groups</b>	<b>Number of species</b>	<b>Endemic species in Sri Lanka</b>
01	Mammals	42	2
02	Birds	128	7
03	Reptiles	48	7
04	Amphibians	14	2
05	Butterflies	40	8
06	Snails	6	—
07	Freshwater fish	37	2

*Source:* Yala National Park (2023).

In terms of the built environment, Yala PA safeguards several ancient ruins that are older than 2200 years, such as Jaburagala Kanda, Magul Maha Viharaya and Sithulpauwa. All the features of the forest mentioned above provide reasons for tourists to visit the Yala,

and PA tourism greatly benefits the local and national economies. The environmental value attracts the PA tourists, and Yala's cultural and historical importance is a key appeal for visitors on an annual pilgrimage.

#### *Administration and conservation efforts of Yala*

Yala is the oldest Asian wildlife sanctuary, having been declared a PA by the Ceylon Game Protection Society in 1900. This society was established to mitigate intensive hunting by the British colonists for recreational purposes. In 1938, a one block of Yala became an NP under the National Flora and Fauna Protection Ordinance and declared the Yala National Park (Ruhuna NP). After the establishment of the Wildlife Department in 1949, the zones (blocks) were designated in 1973. The Department of Wildlife Conservation (DWC) conserves the biodiversity of Sri Lanka. The main office of the DWC for Yala is located in Palatupana at the park's main entrance. Seven other sub-offices protect the border of Yala. The park warden is the official guardian of Yala. Plants and wildlife within the park are protected, and any illegal activity such as cutting down trees, hunting, removing plants, animals, or other resources, destroying animal eggs or nests, and lighting fires is entirely prohibited. People conducting such illegal activity are liable for fines or arrests.

Conservation of the forest and wildlife is the primary concern of the Yala Wildlife Office (YWO), but their role is made more challenging due to environmental issues arising from human activities such as logging, gathering forest materials and mining sand and gems. Such activities often have the support of politicians (Hettiarachchi, n.d.). Chena cultivation encroaches on the land, and illegal drugs like marijuana have been cultivated deep in the forest. The grazing of village livestock, which roams inside the PA, puts more pressure on the grasslands as the domestic livestock compete for food with the other grazing wild animals. Human-wildlife conflict is prevalent and sometimes life-threatening for both parties. There were reports of 11 elephant deaths and one human death between 2016 and 2018 (Yala National Park, 2022). Many forest officers have also been shot and killed by poachers.

Tourism and pilgrimage in the park cause environmental issues like noise and air pollution due to vehicle traffic (Newsome, 2013). The pilgrims (see Section 4.2.1) are not generally concerned about the natural environment and cause environmental issues like solid waste and noise pollution in Yala. Such environmental problems are rarely caused

by PA tourists who appreciate nature, but their increasing numbers has resulted in an increase in jeep safari tours and other vehicle traffic, which causes air pollution.

The YWO has undertaken several conservation initiatives to manage and minimise the negative environmental impacts of human activity with the PA. The YWO conducts regular patrols to protect the border through which the people in the neighbouring villages can enter the park. The YWO also constructed an electric fence to limit the ability of wild animals to reach some of the neighbouring villages. The Yala management supplies water to the wildlife during the drought period with the support of villages. The YWO also conducts community empowerment and forest conservation programmes with selected villages on the border of Yala and educates children about the values of this PA. They have also educated the safari jeep drivers about the need to maintain the speed limit and have introduced garbage bins inside jeeps to reduce waste on the land (Karunarathna et al., 2017). Those who break the rules can be fined, or their vehicle registration may be cancelled temporarily.

## **4.2 Human geographic characteristics in the study area**

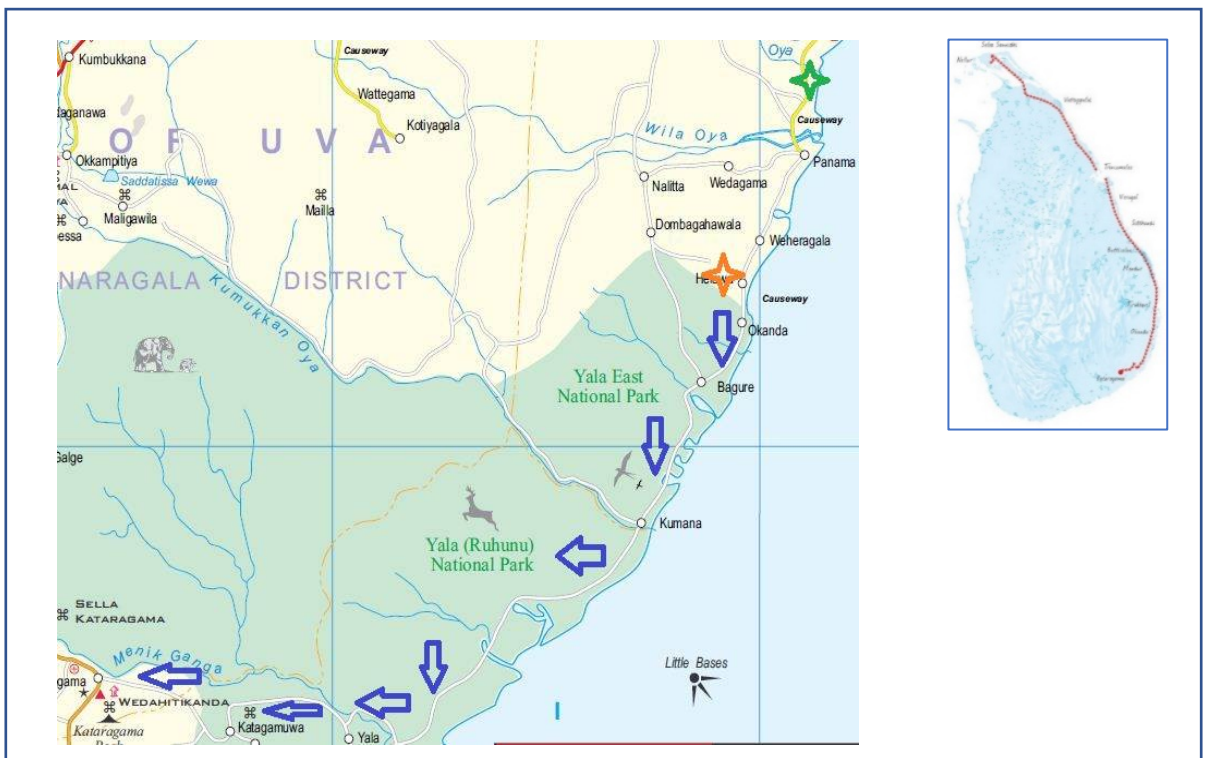
### **4.2.1 Historical and cultural values in Yala and Thissamaharama area**

The Yala-Thissamaharama area features in Sri Lanka's history and legends. This area had been a centre for past hydraulic and agricultural civilisation and was located on the ancient trading route known as the Silk Road (Thissamaharama DSD, n.d.). Thissamaharama was the capital of the Ruhuna kingdom in the 3rd century BC. The Thissamaharamaya pagoda and the ruins of ancient buildings (Dhathu mandiraya, Bhodigaraya and Pilima geya) can still be seen in the current city. There are five main 'tanks' or reservoirs – Tissa, Yoda, Weerawila, Pannegamuwa and Debarawewa – which were built by ancient kings to support paddy cultivation during the dry months. These tanks are located around the city and have irrigated paddy fields for hundreds of years. Thissamaharama has been famous all over the country for its rice production and Ruhuna curd for many generations.

Sithulpauwa is one of the sacred places in Yala and it is believed that more than 12,000 Arahats (the Buddhist monks who achieved great nirvana) lived there. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 400,000 pilgrims visited this place annually; their visit usually lasted just one day (Thissamaharama DSD, n.d.). Another type of annual pilgrim is the Yatra pilgrim. Yatra pilgrims come from the far north, by walking for several days,

and visit between July and August to worship the Hindu temple of Kataragama. This place is sacred for believers of the god Kandakumara, who is the god of success and prosperity (McGilvray, 2010). The Yala park management keeps the gates open for 15 days for these devotees as the ancient pilgrimage route goes through Yala (Figure 4.5). In 2004, 30,000 pilgrims entered the area. More recent statistics are not available, but roughly 20,000 to 30,000 pilgrims are believed to visit annually (Piyarathne, 2017). Once a Yatra pilgrim enters Yala, they spend two to three nights there. Even though they do not deliberately seek to harm the wildlife, they camp, cook and sleep in the forest, which results in some environmental impacts that concern Yala park management.

**Figure 4.5 Kataragama Yatra pilgrimage route**



Source: Harrigan (2019).

#### 4.2.2 Urbanisation and infrastructure

Hambantota is the principal city in the study area. It has an intercity bus station, international harbour and convention centre, and the country's largest international airport, Mattala, and the international cricket stadium are also located near Hambantota. Thissamaharama is the main town in the Thissamaharama DSD. The towns of Kirinda and Kataragama are also important for PA tourism due to their proximity to Yala. All the tourist amenities, including food and accommodation, are clustered around Hambantota city and the towns of Thissamaharama, Kirinda and Kataragama. Thissamaharama has developed rapidly due to the growth of PA tourism after the civil war.

### 4.2.3 Population and employment

Government statistics from just prior to the data-collection period, 2019, showed that the Thissamaharama area had a population of 85,324 individuals residing in 21,207 households. The major ethnic group in the area was the Sinhala community, comprising approximately 97% of the population, while the Muslim population accounted for around 2.4% (Thissamaharama DSD, n.d.). In terms of education, 70% of the population had attained a level of education equivalent to the General Certificate of Education (GCE) Ordinary Level (OL) examination. Table 4.2 provides a breakdown of population information for the DSD Thissamaharama and VOD Ranakeliya.

**Table 4.2 Population information for Thissamaharama and Ranakeliya**

	<b>Thissamaharama DSD</b>	<b>Ranakeliya VOD</b>
Population	85,324	1,445
Households	21,207	371
Sinhala	97%	100%
Residents with qualifications up to GCE OL	70%	36%
Families in the agricultural sector	36%	73%

*Source:* Thissamaharama DSD (n.d.).

The agricultural sector employed 36% of the workforce in Thissamaharama DSD and 73% in Ranakeliya VOD. Some individuals involved in agriculture may also work as labourers in agricultural lands owned by others. The private sector, on the other hand, is associated with industrial jobs. The private sector accounted for 19% of the workforce in Thissamaharama DSD. Government sector employment and self-employment were relatively equal, each representing 12% of the workforce in the Thissamaharama DSD (Thissamaharama DSD, n.d.).

The majority of the population in the Thissamaharama DSD consists of families with incomes below Rs8,000 (USD43.2) per month; 6,881 households fell in this income category. On the other hand, the category with the highest income level, exceeding Rs40,000 (USD216) per month, represented the smallest proportion of families, accounting for only 4.8% of all families in the area, or 1,015 households. 6,280 individuals were unemployed out of approximately 45,000 of workforce in Thissamaharama DSD (Thissamaharama DSD, n.d.). It is important to note that the

tourism development in the region has attracted a substantial number of employees who have found direct or indirect employment opportunities in the tourism industry.

In 2019, a significant number of households (7,462) in the Thissamaharama DSD households received financial assistance due to their status below the poverty line. Ninety-seven families were homeless, while 455 families resided in temporary shelters. Lack of access to electricity was reported by 620 households, while 948 households lacked proper sanitary facilities; for example, toilets. Only 1966 families had access to safe drinking water. Table 4.3 provides some statistics on poverty in Thissamaharama and Ranakeliya.

**Table 4.3 Poverty information for Thissamaharama and Ranakeliya**

	<b>Thissamaharama DSD</b>	<b>Ranakeliya VOD</b>
<b>Total number of households</b>	21,207	371
<b>Number of households that reported...</b>		
– Low income	6,881	130
– Below the poverty line	7,462	151
– No houses (homeless)	97	8
– In temporary shelters	455	2
– No electricity	620	3
– No sanitary facilities	948	32
– No safe drinking water	19,241	315

*Source:* Thissamaharama DSD (n.d.).

In 2019, the Ranakeliya VOD (Village Officer's Division) comprised 371 households, accommodating a population of 1,445 individuals (Thissamaharama DSD, n.d.). All individuals in this region belonged to the Sinhala ethnic group. Thirty-six per cent of the residents had received an education up to the General Certificate of Education (GCE) Ordinary Level (OL), which is 11% higher than the average for the entire Thissamaharama DSD (Divisional Secretariat Division). However, only 20% of individuals had successfully passed the OL examination and pursued higher studies. Regarding income levels, 130 families fell into the low-income category, earning less than Rs8000 monthly. Most families (181) received an income ranging between Rs8,000 and Rs16,000 (USD43.2–86.4). Only four families fell in the highest income category, earning more than Rs40,000 (USD216) per month (Thissamaharama DSD, n.d.).

In 2019, 73% of families in the Ranakeliya area were engaged in agricultural sector jobs (Thissamaharama DSD, n.d.). Eight families did not have their own houses, and two families were living in temporary shelters. Three households had no electricity, while sanitary facilities were lacking in 32 households. Access to safe drinking water was reported in only 56 homes. Furthermore, approximately 151 households were living below the poverty line and relied on financial aid provided by the government (Thissamaharama DSD, n.d.).

In the specific context of Ranakeliya, 20% of households were affected by extreme poverty, while 43% experienced moderate poverty in 2019 (Thissamaharama DSD, n.d.). Detailed information regarding the number of employees working in the PA tourism sector or the YWO in Ranakeliya was unavailable. It is worth noting that while Thissamaharama DSD as a whole records moderate levels of poverty, Ranakeliya remains one of the poorest VODs.

This socioeconomic overview of the Ranakeliya community underscores the significance of researching PA tourism and its impact on the local community. Such research aims to enhance the benefits derived from PA tourism, particularly for some of the most economically disadvantaged communities within the nation.

#### **4.2.4 Chena agricultural activity**

The Ranakeliya community still engages in an agricultural activity called ‘chena cultivation’ on the margin of Yala. Chena cultivation is also known as ‘slash-and-burn’ agriculture because the primary method of land preparation is slashing and burning. The trees in the forest are slashed and then left to dry for a few days, and then the cut forest is burned to clear the ground (Figure 4.6). Chena is a primitive and traditional cultivation method practised in the dry and semi-arid climate zones in Sri Lanka for approximately three months per year (Figure 4.7). The people living in areas next to Yala have owned the agricultural land called chena for generations but do not have any legal documents to prove their ownership. The slash-and-burn cultivation on the margin of the PA threatens Yala as the local communities try to expand the chena towards the forest.



**Figure 4.6 Chena (slash-and-burn) agriculture in Sri Lanka – a burned chena before cultivation**



*Photo credit:* <https://ejjustice.lk>

**Figure 4.7 Chena (slash-and-burn) agriculture in Sri Lanka – a cultivated chena**



*Photo credit:* <https://sustainablefarmingsystem.blogspot.com/2018/06/chena-cultivation-traditional-farming.html>

Neighbouring villagers depend on the forest, from which they collect herbs or firewood. However, their crops and lives are also exposed to the threat of wild animals such as

elephants, wild boars, and peacocks. In recognition of the local peoples' dependence on the forest, the YWO has offered employment opportunities to the local communities living in the neighbouring villages, including Ranakeliya.

### **4.3 PA tourism in the study area**

#### **4.3.1 Types of tourism**

Spiritual, beach and PA tourism are the three dominant forms of tourism around the study area. Spiritual tourism is central to Kataragama, Thissamaharama Temple and Sithulpauwa. Most domestic tourists who come to Kataragama for spiritual purposes also engage in PA and beach tourism. In contrast, PA tourism is the fundamental motivation for international visitors (SLTDA, 2018), and only a few foreign visitors visit the area for spiritual and beach tourism, if time permits during their tour.

Kirinda Beach is a well-known attraction in this area for beach tourism. The scenic view of the beach is iconic, and tourists can observe or join the fishermen's activities, but the beach is not suitable for swimming or surfing. Some tour operators organise whale-watching tours. All the NPs and sanctuaries in the vicinity of the case study area offer PA tourism opportunities. Ridiyagama Safari Park also brands itself for wildlife tours – but in a captive environment, unlike the other NPs. However, Yala has the highest visitor numbers and is the most famous PA tourism destination (SLTDA, 2018).

#### **4.3.2 PA tourism infrastructure**

Tourist facilities such as accommodation, food and other amenities are centralised around the towns of Thissamaharama, Kirinda and Kataragama. For overnight PA tourists, the accommodation facilities available range from USD30 homestay rooms to 5-star hotel rooms that cost USD150–300 per night. Campsites (up to 5-star grade) are also scattered across the study area, offering a wildlife safari experience. Luxury camping costs between USD600 and USD1000 per night (Kulu Safaris, n.d.). The accommodation cost varies depending on the season, and the hotels mainly target the international tourist market. Some top-grade hotels have prepared activities such as hiking, village tours, cycling and camping nights. Some hotels also offer safari jeep wildlife tours in Yala PA.

Tourists seek food from popular restaurants offering local and foreign menus (Things to do, 2017). Some hotels pack breakfast and lunch for the PA tourists as there is no place to buy food inside the park. Thissamaharama town is important for PA tourists, providing

tourist amenities such as communication, banking, shopping, taxi services and bars (Thissamaharama DSD, n.d.). Safari jeep services are available at Punchi Akurugoda and Yala junction near Thissamaharama and Kataragama.

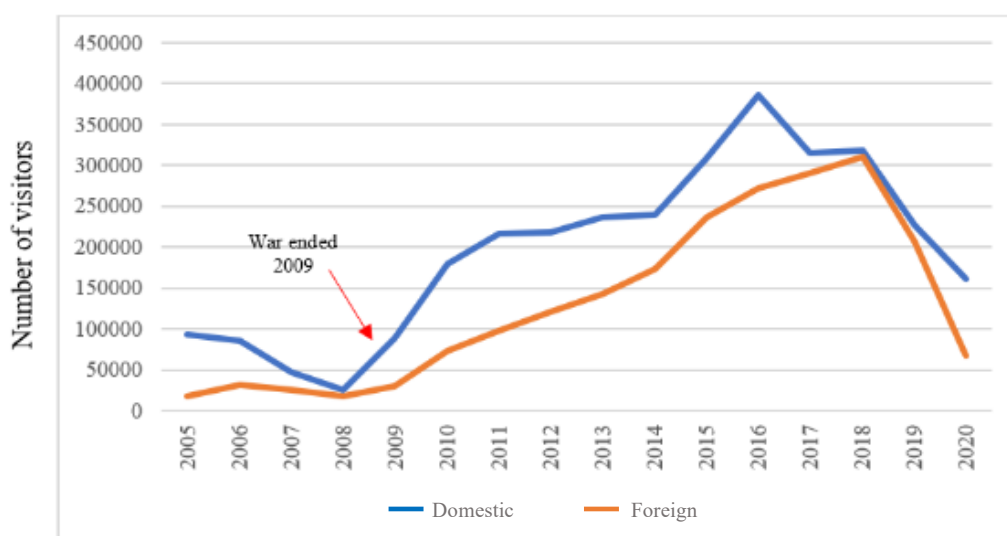
#### **4.3.3 Timeline of incidents that affected the PA tourism sector**

The tourism industry is sensitive to the environmental and political conditions of a country. PA tourism sector in the study area has faced great turmoil and significant shocks to the tourism system due to external challenges. The growth in PA tourism was disturbed by the beginning of the civil war in the 1980s. A fluctuating pattern of tourist arrivals can be seen during the intermittent peace talks and war periods (SLTDA, 2018). Tourist arrivals in 2005 dropped after the Boxing Day tsunami hit Yala in 2004, and this was also the case in the nearby coastal areas. Tourist arrivals declined further between 2006 and 2009 because of the civil war. The sector picked up after the war ended, but then the terrorist attacks over Easter 2019 again brought tourism to an abrupt halt – as was evident when I undertook the fieldwork for the research into PA tourism in Yala. Then, in early 2020, COVID-19 emerged, and the nation's borders were closed to tourists and domestic travel movements restricted.

Sri Lankan tourism statistics do not include data on the number of foreign and domestic tourist visits in Yala before 2005. However, there are statistics showing that 89,698 domestic visitors and 29,822 foreign visitors arrived in Yala in 2009 (before the civil war ended). Visitor numbers doubled the following year, to 179,965 domestic visitors and 73,580 foreign visitors. In 2016, Yala recorded its highest number of domestic visitor arrivals, with 385,442 domestic tourists, while 2018 saw the highest number of international visitors (311,368) (SLTDA, 2018). The lowest number of international visitors was in 1998, which can be attributed to the civil war. Figure 4.8 presents a timeline of international and domestic visitor arrivals to Yala. The figure shows the dramatic growth in international tourist arrivals, and hence the rapid growth of the PA tourism sector, after the end of the civil war in 2009. It also shows that abrupt crash in both domestic and foreign visitors to Yala in 2019, as a result of the Easter terrorist attack and subsequent national security concerns.

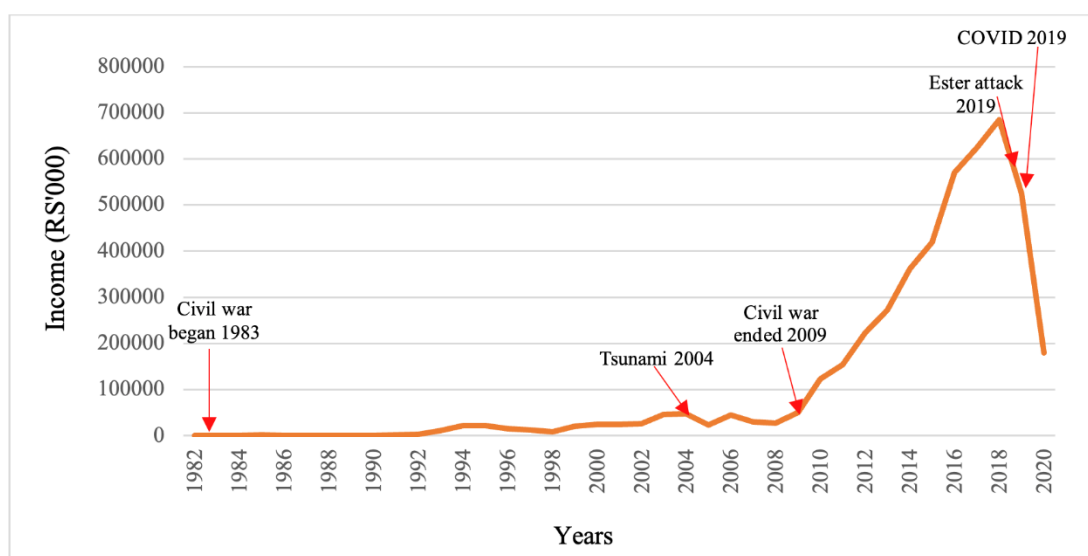
Figure 4.9 shows the international tourist revenue generated by Yala between 1982 and 2019. The total income from Yala PA tourism in 1982 was Rs962,700, and this had increased more than five-fold, to Rs524,809,680, by 2019.

**Figure 4.8 Visitor arrivals in Yala between 1982 and 2020**



Source: SLTDA (2023).

**Figure 4.9 Foreign revenue generated by PA tourism in Yala between 1982 and 2020**



Source: SLTDA (2023).

Table 4.4 shows domestic and foreign tourist arrivals and income earned through PA tourism by Yala and five other neighbouring PAs in 2019. Even though domestic tourist numbers are slightly higher than those for foreign tourists, the income earnings show the importance of overseas visitors. This table shows that foreign tourists spend significantly more than domestic tourists (e.g., in Yala and Bundala). In 2019, the number of tourists attracted to, and the income generated by Yala alone were greater than the total number

of visits and revenue earned by the five other parks. Hence, Yala can be considered the ‘giant’ of the regional- and national-level PA tourism sector in Sri Lanka.

**Table 4.4 Tourist arrivals and income earned by PA tourism in 2019**

PAs	Tourist arrivals		Income (Rs)	
	Domestic	Foreign	Domestic	Foreign
Yala	227,494	206,843	13,396,990	524,809,679
Udawalawa	174,623	175,251	10,206,890	458,567,675
Bundala	10,074	8,555	393,240	15,311,036
Lunugamwehera	2,204	660	96,444	1,147,405
Kumana	27,292	6,567	1,177,610	11,471,885
Lahugala	473	27	17,620	48,650

*Source:* SLTDA (2019).

#### **4.3.4 PA tourism in Yala**

The best time to visit Yala is between February and June, after the rainy season. The park closes from September to October due to drought (Yala National Park, 2022). Tickets are issued in the morning (from 5.30 a.m.), and the gate opens from 6 a.m. until 11 a.m. for the morning tours. The tours resume at 2 p.m. in the afternoon, and the park remains open until 6 p.m. Visitors can choose a half-day or full-day tour, while some can stay overnight in a campsite or a bungalow.

The safari can be pre-booked online, and tickets can also be purchased through the safari jeep drivers. The ticket price differs for domestic and foreign visitors. The ticket price for a domestic visitor was Rs.60 (USD0.9) in 2019, whereas for a foreign visitor, the ticket price was Rs.2600 (USD37) in 2019. In 2019, the revenue earned by Yala was Rs.684,661,686 (USD3,697,534) from foreign visitors and Rs.19,233,180 (USD103,869) from domestic visitors, even though tourist arrivals to Sri Lanka had dropped after the Easter terrorist attacks (SLTDA, 2019).

The YWO cannot provide a wildlife tracker to guide every tour group because there are only about 60 trackers. The private tour guides who come with the tourist groups or the drivers of the safari jeeps work as interpreters instead of wildlife trackers. All the safari jeeps are privately owned and run mainly by a few businessmen in the Thissamaharama



area. Most young men in the neighbouring community work as safari jeep drivers. Both wildlife trackers and jeep drivers accept tips.

The tourism facilities currently available inside the park and the activities tourists can be involved in during the tour are limited. An information centre, museum, souvenir shop and canteen are available at the main office in Palatupana (Yala National Park, 2022). Toilet facilities are available at the main entrance (Figure 4.10) and one other location inside the park. The current tourism facilities are outdated and fail to meet the rising tourism demand (Figure 4.11). There are seven tourist bungalows and six campsites located in Block 2 (Figure 4.12), and they must be booked through the head office of DWC in Colombo. Tourists can engage in activities like bird and animal watching, wildlife photography, camping and beach walking during the tour. The safari jeeps stop at the tsunami memorial, where a destroyed bungalow is located (Figure 4.13).

**Figure 4.10 The main entrance to Yala National Park, Palatupana**



**Figure 4.11 Information centre and souvenir shop**



**Figure 4.12 Tourists bungalow in Yala**



**Figure 4.13 Tsunami memorial statue**



#### **4.3.5 Stakeholders in Yala PA tourism**

Three parties – the government, private sector, and local community – contribute to PA tourism, each in a different way. The regional council (RC), Thissamaharama Divisional Secretariat Office, SLTDA and the YWO are the key government institutions linked to PA tourism. The RC does the cleaning, rubbish management, urban beautification, and maintenance of public facilities; DSD is involved in registration and issuing the licences for starting tourism businesses; and the SLTDA gives quality assurance certificates for tourist hotels and trains employees such as tour guides and chefs (SLTDA, 2020). The DWC sells the PA tourism product to tourists and manages PA conservation. The YWO's role in representing the product and providing services is critical in shaping the tourists' first impressions of the Yala PA tourism product.

Jeep owners and hotel owners are the predominant private-sector PA tourism stakeholders. There are approximately 1200 jeeps working within and around Yala PA, and most of the jeep owners live around the study area. The owners of the middle-level and star-grade hotels, however, are outsiders whose hometowns are mainly in the Colombo area (Thissamaharama DSD, n.d.). Five-star category hotels are run by national and international chains; for example, Jetwing Yala (Figure 4.14). The tour operators and organisers are mainly based in Colombo and have contact with safari jeep services and hotels. Some of these grand hotels have tour operating businesses; for instance, the



Cinnamon Hotel belongs to John Keells Holdings, which also owns a tour operating firm called Walkers (John Keells Holdings, 2020). The private sector is the primary source of jobs for the local community in the Yala PA tourism sector.

**Figure 4.14 An example of 5-star tourist accommodation in the study area**



The local community is minimally employed in the government sector and widely involved in private-sector jobs. Private-sector businesses contribute to PA tourism by owning small-scale hotels or offering employment for jeep drivers. At the end of the civil war, the young men in the study area primarily sought work as jeep drivers to cater to the growth of PA tourism. The locals who work in hotels mostly serve in low-paying, back-of-house jobs such as cleaning or gardening due to inadequate education, lack of training or English-speaking skills (Newsome, 2013). Recently, the YWO has offered further job opportunities linked to PA tourism to the local community in neighbouring villages, such as wildlife tracker and ranger positions. Furthermore, downstream employment from the PA tourism sector has opened up job opportunities for people living in the surrounding villages; for example, as mechanics and in positions in security, construction and gardening. The income generated from these jobs is crucial to the local community. Even the chena farmers can directly sell their products to domestic tourists.

#### **4.4 Chapter summary**

Yala is a biologically and culturally rich PA which caters for the highest number of domestic and international tourists of all of the country's national parks. Yala is becoming a substantial source of income for the Sri Lankan national economy. The economic

potential of Yala has become the key lure to attract interested parties (i.e., outside stakeholders) to reap the benefits from PA tourism. Following the end of the civil war more than a decade ago, the PA tourism sector has experienced massive growth, but the people living in the local community have not seen significant improvements in their lives or financial well-being. Even though some individuals have found a menial position within PA tourism, the community as a whole continues to endure severe poverty. Meanwhile, the local people continue their traditional practices and livelihoods, some of which – such as chena cultivation – pose a major threat to the conservation efforts within Yala.

This case study offers an ideal setting to deepen the understanding of how local communities and their resources are utilised in the development of PA tourism. The research is founded on theoretical concepts about community development and PA tourism that have been identified in the literature. The research engages various stakeholders to evaluate and expand on these theoretical concepts. By focusing on Yala PA and the Ranakeliya community, the case study approach of the research allows for a comprehensive and multifaceted exploration of the complex issues surrounding PA tourism in a developing country. This chapter has presented the case study context of the research. The next two chapters delve into the empirical evidence (findings) from the fieldwork.

## Chapter 5: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT IN PROTECTED AREA TOURISM

*“Protected area-based tourism has many stakeholders. Each group has its own particular values and objectives – its own ‘culture’ indeed. This complex mosaic of stakeholder interests makes constant demands upon park management. The groups who have a direct interest in, and are affected in different ways by, park and tourism management policies.”*

(World Commission on Protected Areas, 2022, p. 47)

Tourism is a collective effort of several stakeholders, who together form complex and dynamic socioeconomical phenomena (Snyman & Bricker, 2019). The stakeholders’ roles in tourism activities and their relationships are vital for ensuring the sustainability of protected area (PA) tourism. The local community is an important stakeholder, and their resources are equally valuable for any type of tourism (Heslinga et al., 2019). The local community’s role is crucial as they are the hosts and the real owners of these resources (Shoeb-Ur-Rahman et al., 2020). The key questions this chapter addresses are:

1. How do stakeholders use community resources for PA tourism?
2. What role does power play in circulating the benefits among stakeholder groups?

The chapter draws on data gathered through semi-structured interviews conducted with PA tourism stakeholders of Yala, in the Thissamaharama DSD. The data have been analysed to generate several core themes in an attempt to answer these two key questions.

The first part of this chapter identifies the community capitals (CC) in Ranakeliya VOD and analyses how the various parties use this capital, with particular attention paid to external stakeholders. The key stakeholders’ roles and relationships in contributing to PA tourism in Yala are then investigated. The third section reveals how the different stakeholders access Ranakeliya’s CC and the conflicts over the distribution of benefits. Finally, the critical issues embedded within the power dynamics of the stakeholder groups in Yala PA tourism are examined.

### 5.1 Community capitals

*Community capitals* (CC) are the assets (natural, physical, financial, human, social, political, and cultural resources) belonging to a community that have a pivotal role in maximising community benefits through sustainable tourism (Stone, 2013).

Resource utilisation for PA tourism is not limited to the communities bordering the park, but is also connected to the neighbouring town areas such as Thissamaharama. Yala PA tourism draws not only on the CC in Ranakeliya but also on the CC in an additional 20 Village Officer's Divisions (VODs) located around the periphery of the park. However, PA tourism places significant pressure on Ranakeliya's CC as this VOD is close to the main entrance to Yala PA. This proximity to the entrance connects the Ranakeliya community and capital to outside stakeholders and exposes them to the direct impacts of PA tourism. Researchers have expressed an increasing concern that CC close to PAs is misused in the context of PA tourism worldwide (Mutanga et al., 2017). It is, therefore, essential to investigate whether Ranakeliya's CC is being used responsibly, ethically, and sustainably, and most importantly, whether PA tourism benefits the Ranakeliya community.

### **5.1.1 Natural and physical capitals**

Yala PA is the most critical common resource shared by the Ranakeliya community, given its biological diversity, scenic value, and economic potential, which is managed by the park's wildlife officers. As a tourist attraction, Yala generates household income and attracts investments in PA tourism businesses, contributing to financial capital in Ranakeliya. Using the example of one source of natural resource-based income, a Yala officer pointed out:

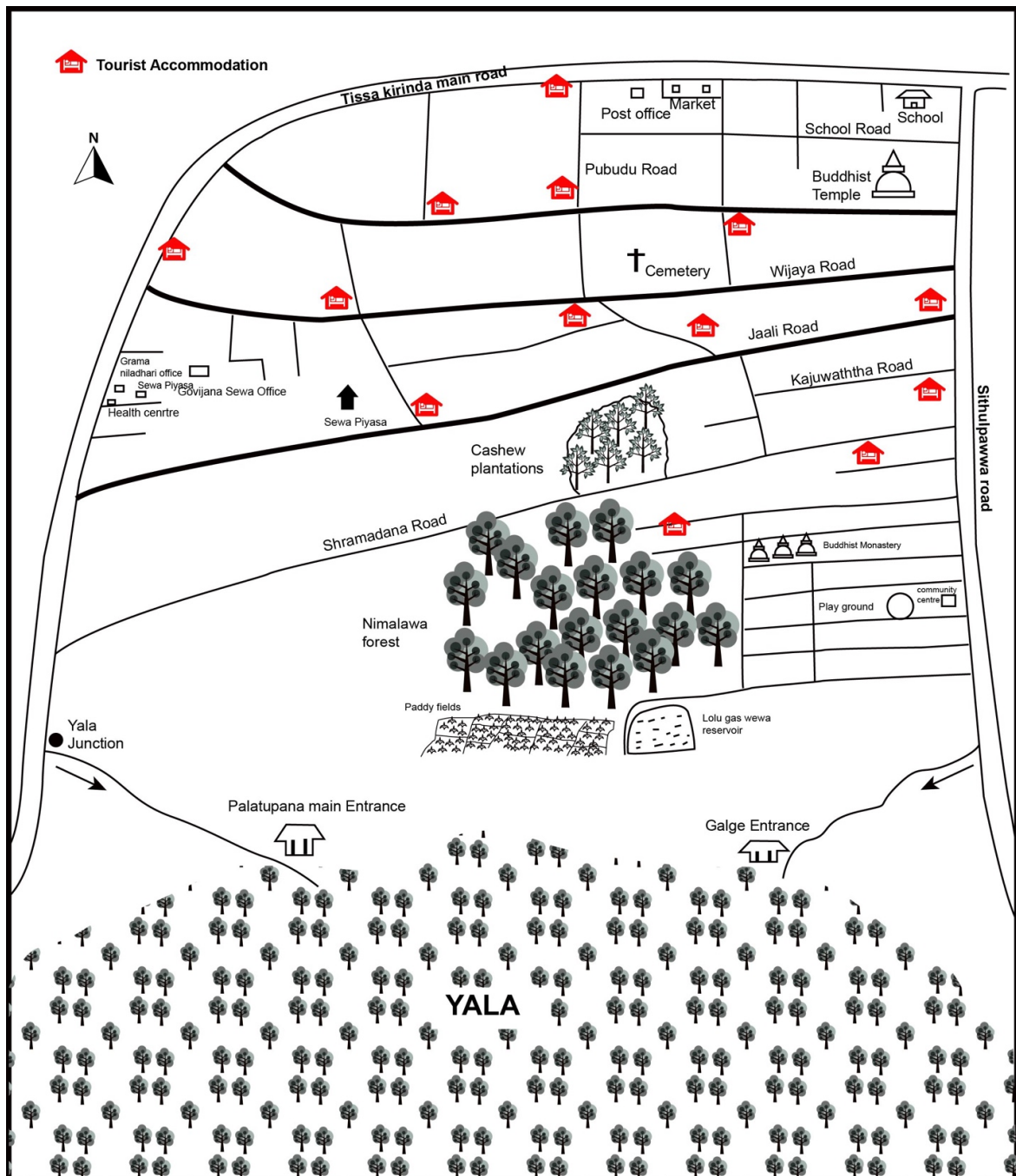
“The people in this area are fortunate to have Yala. They can freely become a millionaire by selling peacock feathers at the beginning. The peacock feathers are freely available in and around the park when they naturally shed their feathers and are then collected. The peacock feathers are a popular souvenir among domestic tourists.” (Yala officer)

As well as engaging in Yala PA tourism, people in the neighbouring villages still make a conventional living by collecting firewood, traditional medicinal plants and fruits. Some try to earn quick income by selling wild meat to domestic tourists who visit Kataragama, although this is illegal and may lead to a fine or arrest. The park warden confirmed that the highest number of poaching incidents each year are at the Yala border. There is a high demand for Sambar deer, deer, and wild boar meat; one kilogram of any of these is worth between USD1.79 and USD2.04 (Rs350–400). While legal butchers in the town do not sell wild meat, it is widely available simply by contacting a community member.

Ranakeliya tourists, business owners and outside stakeholders utilise Ranakeliya's *physical capital*, such as its buildings, roads, electricity, water, and telecommunications

infrastructure. When I was conducting the fieldwork for the research, I learnt that the Yala Wildlife Committee (YWC) members had created a map capturing Ranakeliya's natural and physical capitals for community forest management. Figure 5.1 is a community-generated map to show how the community view their natural and physical capital. According to the interview participants, the physical capital in Ranakeliya is not as widely used as the facilities available in the Thissamaharama town area.

**Figure 5.1 Resource map of Ranakeliya**



Ranakeliya is bordered by two main roads, Sithulpauwa and Kirinda (Figure 5.1). From these two main roads, the two minor roads begin, leading to Yala National Park. One begins from Kirinda Road and heads to the Palatupana main entrance, while the other starts from Sithulpauwa Road and goes to the Galge entrance. Tourist accommodation businesses are located close to the main and minor roads around Ranakeliya. Outside stakeholders directly own and control local infrastructure and facilities. Local community members own only five of the 13 tourist accommodation businesses in Ranakeliya. The community's other physical capitals – Lolugaswewa tank (a water reservoir), paddy fields, cashew plantation, temples, post office, health centre, community centre and market – have no direct link with PA tourism in Yala.

### **5.1.2 Human, financial, and social capitals**

The stakeholders I interviewed confirmed that outside stakeholders involved in Yala PA tourism are particularly interested in hiring the local people in Ranakeliya for their tourism businesses. However, the question remains whether the Ranakeliya community appreciates the significance of their *human capital* and their efforts to enhance their skills to fulfil the demands of the hospitality industry, which is looking for workers for more specialised and skilled positions.

A few community members have become tourism entrepreneurs by investing their financial, physical, and social capital in the PA tourism sector. The local people have used personal and retirement funds for *financial capital* to invest in PA tourism in Ranakeliya. Three of the interviewees invested in tourist accommodation. One participant works in the YWO and had saved money to build tourist accommodation. Another, a woman who worked as a housemaid in Middle Eastern countries for many years, shared:

“Now I am too old to work overseas. I planned my future and thought that I need an income the day I cannot work. So, I built my home first and then built this homestay upstairs for local tourists.” (local community member who has invested in tourist accommodation)

A retired army officer invested his pension fund in building suite-type accommodation for international tourists. According to the community survey, only two others in the Ranakeliya community have invested their money in PA tourism accommodation. Other community members have taken informal loans from private money lenders with high interest rates to invest in other PA tourism businesses; for example, to buy jeeps to run

tours. None of the community members was interested in discussing these loans openly; however, the former village officer confirmed that issues exist:

“There are some informal collective loan systems they can obtain when applied as a group. The person who gives these loans comes to the village and does not return until the due money is ready to be collected.”  
(former village officer)

Members tend to get these types of loans due to difficulty accessing loans from formal financial organisations where various required documents are not always easy to produce (e.g., the legal ownership of their land, or proof of permanent income). Even though the Divisional Secretariat has conducted an awareness programme through the Central Bank about the risks of using unauthorised financial agencies, local people are still inclined to use these easier and quicker methods. The risk is that when PA tourism is halted by events such as terrorist attacks or COVID-19, the community is trapped in such loans.

From my observation, the social relationships in the Ranakeliya community are vital in acquiring PA tourism-related jobs. Relatives, neighbours, and friends contribute to finding employment in PA tourism. For example, a son and father cooperatively run a laundry business that services hotels and create a few jobs for their neighbours; two school friends have started building their own campsite for PA tourists after working at such a place for several years together; and two other friends in neighbouring houses have improved their life by working as safari jeep drivers, after one introduced the other to his boss (the safari jeep owner) to hire as a driver. However, the social relationships between people who work in PA tourism-related and non-PA tourism-related jobs are somewhat limited and do not extend to the entire community. If the social relationships were more widely spread, more opportunities would arise for people currently marginalised from Yala PA tourism to be involved in tourism-related jobs. Shared goals and aspirations are essential elements of *social capital*. However, it is hard to identify a shared vision held by all the local people of Ranakeliya to generate more significant benefits for their community through PA tourism.

### **5.1.3 Cultural and political capitals**

There is plenty of *cultural capital* in Ranakeliya, such as the historical, spiritual, and legendary values in the Uddagandara temple. The name Ranakeliya means the ‘Game of War’ and is linked to the greatest king in Sri Lankan history, Dutugemunu, who used this area for military training. The king defeated the South Indian king, who ruled, and unified, the northern parts of the island for several decades. However, the chief monk of



Uddagandara temple worried that most of the Ranakeliya community did not know what the name meant, and added:

“These jeep drivers think showing a leopard or an elephant is tourism. Tourism in this area is limited to wildlife, and hardly any international tourist visits this temple or the Thissamaharama temple. The community members who work in tourism do not tell the stories to visitors about these cultural values.” (chief monk of Uddagandara temple)

There is also a Buddhist religious festival called ‘Katina’ which is held at the Uddagandara temple (Figure 5.2) during the rainy season. The festival takes place over several weeks with many community participants. The key message delivered by the Katina festival is ‘No harm to the living things’, which aligns with Yala’s broader conservation goals of not harming animals or living things in the NP. International tourists may not be aware of such colourful religious events, which happen annually near Yala, or their vital message, as this information is not included in tourist itineraries or online.

**Figure 5.2 Uddagandara temple**



*Chena cultivation* (slash-and-burn agriculture) has been embedded in the livelihoods of Ranakeliya’s residents over many generations and shapes local culture. Chena is a traditional economic activity, and some families depend solely on it as a source of income. They stay in their chena’s hut to cultivate at a particular time of the year and often spend



sleepless nights protecting the crops against wild animals. The fieldwork revealed two entirely different experiences related to chena cultivation and its promotion as a tourist experience.

Markus (pseudonym) is an 80-year-old grandfather who was a chena farmer until a decade ago. He had a tree hut on his farm to stay in overnight to protect crops from wild elephants. One day a local tour guide asked him whether he would lease his tree hut to accommodate a foreign couple in exchange for USD10. He agreed. From then on, this guide continued bringing foreign couples until Markus left this tree hut to accommodate tourists and made another for himself. But this newly built tree hut was also taken over by the tourists. The guide continued bringing more and more tourists until Markus quit farming and became the owner of a treehouse accommodation business (Figure 5.3 and Figure 5.4). Now there are several good quality treehouse accommodation businesses in this area, but Markus has become known as the person who introduced the treehouse concept to this area.

**Figure 5.3 Markus's treehouse accommodation – outside appearance**



**Figure 5.4 Markus's treehouse accommodation – inside appearance**



Sumane (a pseudonym) is a husband and a father of four children in his fifties. Chena cultivation is his primary employment. When I met him, he reflected on what he perceived to be careless decisions he has made on chena farming this season:

“This season, I made a great mistake by delaying cultivation while expecting rain. I should have farmed by using the water in two water pits. The rain is too late this time.” (chena farmer)

He regrets that these past decisions have resulted in a sense of disappointment and intensified anxiety regarding his family's survival in the forthcoming months. When asked if he was interested in PA tourism-related jobs or in setting up a PA-related business, he replied:

“They [PA tourism-related jobs] are not for me, and I should have a driving licence and English language speaking skills to work in tourism. I have no connection with a person who works in PA tourism. I will look for general labourer work. Otherwise, how can I feed my children?” (chena farmer)

Sumane commented that he did not feel he had the relevant skills and needed to focus on working to earn money to look after his family. Residents frequently commented on the need to focus on working for survival (in the short term) rather than acquiring skills to enter the tourism industry. Figure 5.5 shows the appearance of Sumane's uncultivated chena.

**Figure 5.5 Sumane's uncultivated chena**



Handicrafts and local foods made by community members offer essential opportunities for visitors to learn about and appreciate a destination's diverse cultural and heritage aspects – its *cultural capital*. Tourists can also support local artisans and the local economy by purchasing souvenirs and food. The absence of handicrafts and value-added food production in Ranakeliya limits the benefits that flow into the community through tourism. Even though several community members are engaged in cattle farming, only one has been involved in producing curd for sale to visitors. Members of the YWC in Ranakeliya have invited the community to create palmyra weavings (Figure 5.6) and to sell them in the Yala souvenir shop. Yala wildlife officers have shown the community some palmyra weaving samples for inspiration. Despite these efforts, not many locals are engaged in making handicrafts to sell as souvenirs to tourists. The obstacles include finding raw materials and gaining weaving skills from other locations, as Ranakeliya is not a traditional weaving community.

Community capitals in Ranakeliya are used at various levels for Yala PA tourism. Ranakeliya's cultural capital can be further improved and linked to PA tourism to bring economic advantages to the local community. One essential step in improving potential CC (cultural, financial, and social capital) is to connect with outside stakeholders; for example, outsiders can invest in palmyra production while hiring local labour (Bennett et al., 2012).



**Figure 5.6 Palmyra weaving bags**



*Political capital* exists, for example, where there are committees that represent the people's voice, have goodwill and trust, and can influence decision making. Politicians can earn or build up their political capital with the public through policies. Ranakeliya has several committees managed by the community or connected to government organisations. Active committees include the 'funeral aid committee' and many others that focus on women, youth, sports activities, and paddy farming. One-third of the Ranakeliya community are members of the Yala Wildlife Committee, or YWC. The YWC is run by the Yala Wildlife Office (YWO) for community forest management, and its aim is to reduce community dependency on the forest. The YWC also supports some non-forest economic activities, such as gardening or crafting, and members from Ranakeliya have requested financial support for an aloe vera plantations following significant interest from a beverage production company. If the community is interested in producing a craft that can be sold to tourists, they can be linked to and directly benefit from Yala PA tourism.

## **5.2 Key stakeholders: roles and challenges in PA tourism development**

In addition to hosts and guests, other actors with diverse socioeconomic and political backgrounds can influence the tourism industry in various ways. It is crucial to examine

the characteristics and roles of these stakeholders to understand their engagement in PA tourism (Snyman & Bricker, 2019). Key stakeholders who have a connection with Yala PA tourism were identified from the fieldwork data. This connection could influence or be influenced by PA tourism in Yala. The stakeholders were then grouped according to their functional behaviours, and from this grouping, five key stakeholder groups were identified: Yala park management, policymakers (at the national and regional level), tourism service providers, local employees, and the local community. The interests of each stakeholder group lie in different areas of PA tourism benefits – financial returns, taxes, health and safety, community development, visitor experience, employment, and conservation goals – and each stakeholder group plays a valuable operational role in influencing and shaping PA tourism. The following subsections introduce the key stakeholder groups (except tourists and the local community), discuss their roles and responsibilities and how they participate in PA tourism, and explore the challenges in PA tourism development in Yala. The tourists were not included in this study. Chapter 6 focuses on the local community as the prominent stakeholder central to this research.

### **5.2.1 Park management**

The Yala PA is managed by the Yala Wildlife Office (YWO). The YWO also offers wildlife tourism products to tourists. According to Yala's managerial staff, the number of international tourist arrivals noticeably increases when a media promotion is released about Yala; for example, via the National Geographic channel. One interviewee from the YWO pointed out that several tourists have criticised this promotional video for exaggerating what Yala offers. The park management is also concerned about their capability to facilitate enough infrastructure to cater for these tourists and whether the wildlife tour experience is worth the cost. One interviewee from the YWO also expressed concern with the way income from tourism activities was dispersed:

“A foreign tourist ticket is USD15. Sixty per cent of the service charge goes to the wildlife fund in the government treasury, and 40 per cent is divided among all the workers in YWO as a bonus at the year's end. Even though this service charge is collected, we do not provide any service to tourists, even plain tea or water to drink. This ticket income is a pure profit. In 2018, Yala earned USD4,100,000 (Rs800,000,000). The total money directly goes to the general coffer. However, as the Department Wildlife Conservation (DWC) is an 'A' grade department, YWO can request money any time from the treasury for its expenses.”  
(YWO officer)

The bonus derived from service charges incentivises employees to stay working for the YWO, as this bonus is the greatest advantage these employees receive through PA

tourism. Such an incentive scheme is not offered to employees in other parks near Yala. However, because 60% of the service charge made available to the YWO is targeted for its conservation activities and the rest is allocated as bonuses, there is no money left to support tourism. A common complaint from the safari jeep owners and drivers was about the poor facilities in the NP, including the lack of infrastructure and the limited number of wildlife trackers. Wildlife trackers interviewed during the research also claim that park management has failed to provide adequate wildlife trackers to every safari jeep visiting the NP. There is a daily limit of 600 safari jeeps – but only 60 wildlife trackers serve in YWO. The local jeep drivers have been assigned to serve as interpreters to fulfil the demand for trackers, but visitors have criticised their service quality; for example, the drivers' lack of knowledge about animal species (Newsome, 2013). The educational aspect of the Yala wildlife safari is thus significantly reduced by the lack of quality trackers provided by Yala park management, and this has the potential to create dissatisfaction among visitors.

The lack of a clear career path for the wildlife trackers is also an issue. One Yala wildlife officer commented on these issues, such as the long wait for permanent positions and subsequent lack of incentive for local people to undertake formal training:

“The wildlife trackers, first, get a probationary appointment and then wait 10–15 years until receiving the permanent appointment. This career has no clear grading system, and this long waiting frustrates them. On the other hand, they are unwilling to leave the job as they can get tips besides the salary. Very few of them work with their inner motivation for self-development during this waiting time. For example, even though becoming a wildlife tracker is an excellent opportunity to get to a higher level of guiding career as they learn new languages and gain a good knowledge about wildlife, very few follow a national tour guide course in SLTDA.” (Yala wildlife officer)

The trackers interviewed during the research endorsed the officer's viewpoint that wildlife trackers in Yala enhance their knowledge and language proficiency primarily through experiential learning rather than from any formal training or educational initiatives offered by the DWC. Uncertainty surrounding career paths has a negative impact on the trackers' job satisfaction. And although tipping enhances the trackers' salaries, this income structure gives rise to concerns about jeep trafficking at wildlife sight, leading to a decline in the quality of wildlife tours in Yala, and hence tourists' satisfaction.

Another YWO management officer reflected on jeep drivers' undesirable practices that harm Yala's reputation as a wildlife destination. This interviewee was concerned that undesirable practices of jeep drivers, such as competing to be the first to enter the park or cheating on the ticket price with international tourists, may damage the quality of the tourist service.

“A black market has been formed among jeep drivers, and they have their subculture including specific linguistic terms during the safari (e.g., for a ‘tour group’, they call a ‘party’). Some jeep drivers tend to receive tips by promising tourists that they are entering the park as the first tour group. The jeep driver then stays overnight at the park entrance to be the first to buy tickets. When the safari jeep driver buys tourist tickets, the driver cheats sometimes. The charge for the vehicle is Rs5100, and a foreign tourist ticket is USD15. Eight per cent of the ticket price is additionally charged just from the first ticket in the group. Some jeep drivers buy the first ticket with the service charge, showing the tourists the ticket price.” (YWO management officer)

Competition among jeep drivers during closing hours at the entrance to the NP and dishonesty about the ticket prices may also cause tourists to lose trust in the jeep operators. Both practices emphasise the money-minded mentality of the local jeep drivers and damage to the standard of service provided by the Yala park management, who have not taken any action yet to solve this issue.

Illegal activities such as drug trafficking in the NP by local community employees were a source of concern for another YWO management officer. He was also concerned with tipping practices by visitors that incentivise drivers to swarm around locations where there was a leopard sighting.

“The jeep drivers and trackers receive generous tips from visitors if they can show [them] a leopard. Their interest in tips increases safari jeep traffic within the park in the presence of a leopard. Some drivers have been involved in illegal activities like drug exchange in the park, whereas some trackers support defending community hunters and gatherers.” (YWO management officer)

Limited education and training are the main reasons behind disciplinary issues like exceeding the speed limit, trafficking inside the park, and striking against the park management's decisions (Buultjens et al., 2005). In Yala, the younger population tend to leave formal education early, in pursuit of employment as safari jeep drivers. This could be mitigated if the YWO were to establish minimal educational requirements when recruiting employees from the local community, but to date the park managers have shown no interest in pursuing this.

Some of the YWO employees also run their own personal PA tourism businesses; for example, providing jeep facilities or accommodation. This can lead to a conflict of interest when the YWO officers prioritise their own private businesses at the expense of their park management duties. One YWO officer revealed:

“There are some officers who forget what their duty is. It is unacceptable that they are fully engaged in their PA tourism business and neglect the duties in YWO. It is like the government pays him a salary to do their own business.” (YWO officer)

Employees who run private businesses on the side disrupt office harmony at the YWO, as their actions result in jealousy and provoke resentment from the other officers. Thus, this unethical practice of running their business during working hours affects collegial relationships within the government sector.

### **5.2.2 Policymakers**

The Ministry of Tourism develops national-level tourism policies which are then implemented by the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA). However, specific to PA tourism, the Ministry of Wildlife and Forest Conservation is responsible for preparing conservation policies, proposing laws, acts and ordinances that affect PA tourism, and enforcing them through parliament. This Ministry is also involved in implementing and evaluating projects under the national budget. The Ministry mainly implements policies, programmes, and projects through the Department of Wildlife Conservation (DWC) headquarters in Colombo. The DWC is responsible for booking Yala bungalows, collecting and reporting on tourist numbers and income, preparing 5-year tourism plans, and training wildlife trackers. Meanwhile, the SLTDA is in charge of conducting training programmes for hotel management, national and regional guides, and promoting tourism in Sri Lanka. The SLTDA has regional branches to coordinate their work at the provincial level, and there are countrywide wildlife offices in every NP under the DWC.

Thissamaharama DSD's role is vital because it is responsible for land ownership and business registrations at the local authority level. The regional council in Thissamaharama also plays an important role in maintaining the cleanliness of and infrastructure in the town area. If a business is related to food or beverages, the regional council only issues it an operation permit after a public health instructor has inspected the premises. The



regional council participates in development projects relevant to PA tourism prepared by the Urban Development and Road Development authorities. The Road Development Authority approves requests from businesses to place signage on roads.

The village office represents the national government at the local level. When a PA tourism business registers with the DSD, the owner's residency needs to be confirmed through the village office. The village office is the immediate point of contact if any issue arises at the local level; for example, if there is any conflict between a PA tourism business and the local community. The village officer is responsible for reporting to the DSD if any illegal activity occurs within their VOD, such as unlawful use of natural resources in PA tourism.

From the park management's point of view, the government's current contribution to PA tourism development is unsatisfactory. A senior executive of Yala PA management noted the inefficiency of the government system. In particular, he was critical of a lack of coordination between governmental organisations:

“There is a forest lot owned by the Forest Department between the two PAs Yala and Nimalawa Reserve, which belongs to DWC. The elephants pass [through] this Forest Department's forest, where some star-rate hotels and campsites are located and bounded by electric fences. When the elephants are in the Forest Department's forest, they are not protected by the Forest Department as the Forest Department only cares about the forest, not the wildlife. Bounding the forest by electric fence again limits the habitat and feeding lands to wildlife. Fifty per cent of elephants born in this area die in infancy due to a food shortage. Therefore, it is better for all the departments for conservation lay under the same Ministry to take decisions that affect two or more departments.” (a senior executive of Yala PA management)

Cooperation between governmental organisations in different areas is suboptimal. The DWC focuses on wildlife conservation while the SLTDA concentrates on tourism development, and so coordination between these two organisations is essential for planning PA tourism in Sri Lanka. For example, numerous governmental organisations in Sri Lanka, such as the Forest Department, the DWC and the Central Environmental Authority, are responsible for environmental conservation. All the governmental organisations aim to protect and conserve nature, but it is difficult to identify any one body to take responsibility for a specific issue.

A director from the Thissamaharama DSD office emphasised the need to improve PA collaboration among tourism stakeholders. He believes this is important not only to

enhance visitor satisfaction through a cohesive destination experience, but also to strengthen local engagement with PA tourism, and so improve the livelihoods of a broad range of residents (e.g., the doctors of traditional medicine) through the creation of new business opportunities and jobs:

“There is a lack of interaction in the tourist board and engagement in the wildlife department. They only depend on the traditional rules. They should be more active and creative in tourism planning. There are attempts to open ‘spas’ around this area, but the regional council did not support it as it may lead to culturally unacceptable activities. The talented doctors who practise traditional medicine in this area missed an excellent opportunity to get involved in tourism. We also suggested building a quality restaurant at the entrance of Yala as the tourists are thirsty after the tour due to the high heat in this area and may enjoy a cool drink. Park management can gain a good income, but I want to emphasise that providing this facility for tourists is essential. The planners think of building roads and accommodations as tourism development, but they should also think beyond that. We have suggested building a bicycle trail and a walking path around the Thissa tank because there should be some activities after the safari tour for the PA tourists who stay a few nights here. Then these activities can generate some jobs for local people. Once we suggested starting a boating service in Thissa tank; the local fishermen opposed it. Therefore, all the parties need to contribute to planning and decision making.” (director from the Thissamaharama DSD office)

Local fishermen opposed the idea of a recreational boating service in Thissa tank as they thought it would interrupt their fishing activities in this water reservoir. The withdrawal of the boating service proposal emphasises the power of the local community’s voice and the importance of community engagement in decision-making processes for PA tourism development.

The senior executive of the park management further elaborated that making decisions becomes difficult when different departments or organisations have conflicting opinions (e.g., in the context of displaying signage):

“When the institutes disagree, the decision is hard to make. If we want to display signage as a visual advertisement of Yala, we must pay the council and the Road Development Authority. Road Development Authority decides the size of the signage and where to display it, but it is ineffective. If a tourist comes to Thissamaharama, all these institutes are responsible for making them curious about Yala PA tourism. Some creative advertisements should focus on this natural resource and place it in the roundabout in Thissamaharama town. Then it would benefit everyone, but there is none.” (a senior executive of Yala PA management)

A DSD policymaker highlighted how a political party at the Thissamaharama Regional Council discontinued attempts to develop local skills and build on traditional handicrafts – a development programme that had been started by the opposition party – and so blocked the flow of PA tourism benefits to the local community.

“Around three decades ago, the political party in power at the regional council started a project called ‘Beyond the curd pot’ in the village that traditionally produces clay pots in Thissamaharama. They trained the people to produce clay products which have a good demand in the international tourist market; for example, clay phone holders, lampshades and other souvenirs. If this trend had been continued, this village would have developed, but unfortunately, the next political party to power cancelled this project due to their hypocritical attitude that the former political party would be accredited if the project continued. The previous political party established a compost plant when there were in power at the regional council. They developed the regional council resources, passed the benefits to the local community, and became the island’s top regional council. However, since they left, the compost plant has been inactive until today.” (DSD policymaker)

Thus, the power struggle between the two political parties has led this pottery village to lag far behind in its potential development. The second example in the quote above, that of an inactive compost plant, also shows the animosity between political parties, which is something that needs to be addressed of government stakeholders.

According to policymakers and a senior executive of park management, an appropriate governmental body is needed to coordinate all these government organisations under one conservation umbrella by merging some organisations with similar functions and objectives.

### **5.2.3 Private-sector tourism service providers**

This stakeholder group includes tour operators, accommodation, transport (e.g., jeep owners), restaurants and other service providers like laundry services. Interview participants commonly perceived that approximately one-third of the private sector is from the Ranakeliya community, and the rest are outsiders; for example, large business owners from Colombo, like hoteliers.

A manager of a 5-star hotel in Ranakeliya, whose owners live in Colombo, described their customer base and how they offer career opportunities for both insiders and outsiders of the Ranakeliya community:

“This hotel’s owner is an outsider living in Colombo. He owns 15 hotels countrywide, and this is his 16th one. We provide accommodation, food

and other entertainment facilities; for example, a bar, gym, spa and swimming pool only for international tourists. Our hotel has been registered with the Tourist Board in Sri Lanka. When this hotel began to build, the locals were against it, thinking it could disturb their village life with the foreign tourists roaming around. The owner handled the situation with the support of political contacts. We have offered a few labouring job opportunities to the local community, such as security guard, garden keeper and swimming pool cleaner. Other managerial positions are held by outsiders who have suitable education qualifications and experience in the hospitality field. We have not faced any challenges except for this Easter attack-related tourist decline.” (manager of a 5-star hotel)

Hoteliers from outside the area with money to invest do not face any barriers to establishing their tourist accommodation businesses, with many gaining political support initially, even though they faced some challenges from locals. After opening the accommodation, they employed locals for some minor positions to get the locals’ support for their business. The cheap local labour force is an additional advantage for their business.

The private-sector tourism service providers have links to other private-sector businesses with no direct connection to PA tourism; for example, tourist accommodation businesses use laundry services. A local laundry owner who runs his business in Ranakeliya stated:

“This is a family business, and I have been running this business for more than 15 years. We only offer our service to tourist hotels, and they pay well rather than offering our service to individual customers. We have a few local employees, but we face a challenge to supply the daily demand. So that we are planning to expand our business in the coming year.” (local laundry owner)

The laundry owner’s comment highlights an issue in the tourism supply chain: accommodation businesses lack access to quality laundry service providers in this area, who cannot meet their demand.

The owner of a small hotel expressed frustrations when dealing with the government sector. For example, he claimed that local businesses face delays when they apply for permits:

“If I own the land and the business, why cannot I display my business sign-board on my land for people to see? We must obtain permission from the council and Road Development Authority. Even if we pay the due amount, we must wait many days to finish the job. If not, we should bribe the officers to accelerate the process.” (owner of a small hotel)

According to this local business owner, government agencies do not support small-scale tourism businesses and favour outside large-scale companies who can spend money to go through the legal procedures. Giving outsiders permits to build hotels near, or even within, the NP often brings negative environmental consequences. One hotelier gave the example of adverse ecological impacts (contaminated food waste eaten by wildlife) created by a building a hotel within the NP:

“Around a decade ago, a famous 5-star-rate hotel was permitted to build inside Yala. The wild boars started dying a few years later, and the disease rapidly spread within a few weeks. The YWO had to kill the symptomatic wild boars by shooting to stop the spreading and bury the dead ones in a common pit. The investigation confirmed that these animals died after eating infected bacon from a hotel’s dump. The dumping site was near the park where the wild boars and other animals could reach.” (hotelier)

The negative impact of a hotel’s dumping site on the park’s wildlife highlights the consequences of improper waste disposal and the importance of responsible environmental practices in the PA tourism accommodation service in Yala.

Like the accommodation services businesses, the transportation services businesses in Yala also play an essential role in the private-sector tourism service provider’s group. When the civil war ended in 2009, investment in safari jeep transportation services increased around the Thissamaharama area. According to the president of the Yala Jeep Society, the size of the jeep operators’ businesses ranges from one vehicle to 60, although most are small businesses. Expansion of the private sector in PA tourism has opened up many job opportunities for the broader community. However, there are also downsides to expanding the tourist service. For example, raising the number of safari jeeps has led to traffic congestion in the park.

The owners of jeep businesses criticised the park management’s maintenance of tourist facilities, particularly road conditions (see Figure 5.7). This owner highlighted issues related to tourism infrastructure, sanitation, and waste management, which negatively affects the visitor experience:

“We often suggested making some facilities for tourists to use inside the park. There are no benches at the two places where the jeeps can stop for rest. The road conditions are not good. The new lavatory facilities construction is not yet finished at the park entrance. The two toilets near the Patanangala beach often leak and subside every ten days. The tourists cannot have their breakfast with this bad smell. When we ask the park management for several days only, they dump the waste, but it is a temporary solution as the problem occurs again in a few days.

The park management does not give a long-term solution, but they are good at giving pompous talks such as ‘We are a wealthy department (DWC) in the country’. They do not use their money effectively to provide tourism facilities adequately.” (owner of a jeep transportation business)

Merely making substantial financial contributions to the national economy through Yala PA tourism proves insufficient when the park’s management neglects to provide the requisite infrastructure facilities demanded by the private sector and PA tourists. The PA tourist does not expect a proper road surface inside a wildlife park as it would not offer a real safari experience, but the jeep owner’s point here is that the park management could do something to fill these potholes – for example, by putting down some gravel – to preventing the jeep’s tyres getting stuck here for several hours. He wondered why this wasn’t happening.

**Figure 5.7 The road conditions inside Yala**



#### **5.2.4 PA tourism-related local employees**

This stakeholder group includes local employees such as wildlife trackers, jeep drivers, and others who work in the tourism industry as, for example, housekeepers and cooks in accommodation businesses. Stakeholders in this group work for tourism service providers, and many do low-paid jobs like gardening or cleaning, for which they are paid approximately USD2.60 (Rs500) a day.

The YWO employs wildlife trackers attached to the Yala PA, whereas the jeep drivers work for private-sector tourism service providers. The trackers interviewed revealed that they are paid USD3.60 (Rs700) daily and earn more through tips than from their salary. Due to the shortage of wildlife trackers, the local jeep drivers also serve as interpreters for self-guided tourists. However, most international tourists come through tour operating services led by national guides (qualified under the National Tour Guide Certificate awarded by SLTDA) who offer professional assistance inside the NP.

The quality of the service these guides – trackers, jeep drivers and national guides – provide varies according to their professionalism, education, and experience. One tracker commented:

“I worked in YWO for more than 20 years and retired a few years ago but again came to work on a contract basis as the lack of experienced wildlife trackers in Yala. We learnt through the experience rather than the training given by the DWC. We have found some foreign tourists who are more knowledgeable about Yala flora and fauna than us. We learnt some scientific names of animals or animal names in foreign languages, even from the tourists at the early stage of our career. We are happy to work here as international tourists pay decent tips. However, these young jeep drivers know nothing about Yala and just try to show leopard or elephant for tips.” (tracker)

Several previous studies have identified similar challenges with jeep drivers and trackers in other NPs in Sri Lanka, like Hurulu, Bundala and Udawalawa NPs (Newsome, 2013; Ranaweera et al., 2015). The issues of the quality of the service such knowledge, guiding and discipline of jeep drivers and trackers are common across all these NPs.

Despite the YWO officer's observations regarding the absence of a clear career path for trackers and the inadequate training offered by the park management for jeep drivers to function as interpreters, all the jeep drivers and trackers who were interviewed for this research viewed their occupations favourably, primarily due to the financial advantages associated with their roles and had a favourable perspective of their services they provide. Regarding professional self-development, the trackers noted that they had developed their knowledge about the park and its animal species through years of experience. The jeep drivers and trackers feel they have improved their English and learnt other languages by talking to visitors. They also believe that poaching has reduced since Yala PA opened and associated job opportunities, such as for trackers and rangers, were created for the local community.

Workers for other tourism businesses also discussed positive outcomes from their employment, such as learning about the hospitality sector, higher disposable income, and the opportunity to strengthen their English language skills. One local housekeeper who works in a campsite owned by an outsider stated:

“I only went to school up to an Ordinary Level [GCE] and did not want to continue my studies. I joined this place last year and worked as a housekeeper. This is my first job, and I learnt much about the hospitality industry as a beginner from other co-workers. I think this is a perfect start to my career, and I can join a large hotel and a well-paid job in the future, having a few years of working experience here. This place offers me food and is close to my home. If I work in the town, I must spend my salary on food and transport, which I can save now. My poor English and low level of education become an obstacle to going to higher levels of this career. I must follow an English course to obtain a placement in the hotel school. However, the advantage of working here is that I can practise speaking English with foreign tourists.”  
(housekeeper)

According to this young housekeeper, the younger generation believes finding a job in PA tourism is more advantageous than continuing school education. However, a low level of formal education is still a challenge to career development. A survey respondent (a young PA tourism employee) and an interview participant (the chief monk) confirmed that hospitality jobs absorb young school leavers in this area. However, these young employees are stuck in low positions in their career as their unfinished school education prevents them from reaching higher managerial positions in the hospitality industry.

### **5.3 Key stakeholders’ relationships**

This section examines the functional relationships developed among stakeholders in Yala PA tourism, as investigated during the fieldwork. The research participants were asked to identify other stakeholder groups with whom they have a close relationship, and the nature of their connections was explored and defined. The exchanges between these groups encompass various aspects, and based on their responses, three primary types of relationships were identified, based on the flow of products and services, of money, and of information.

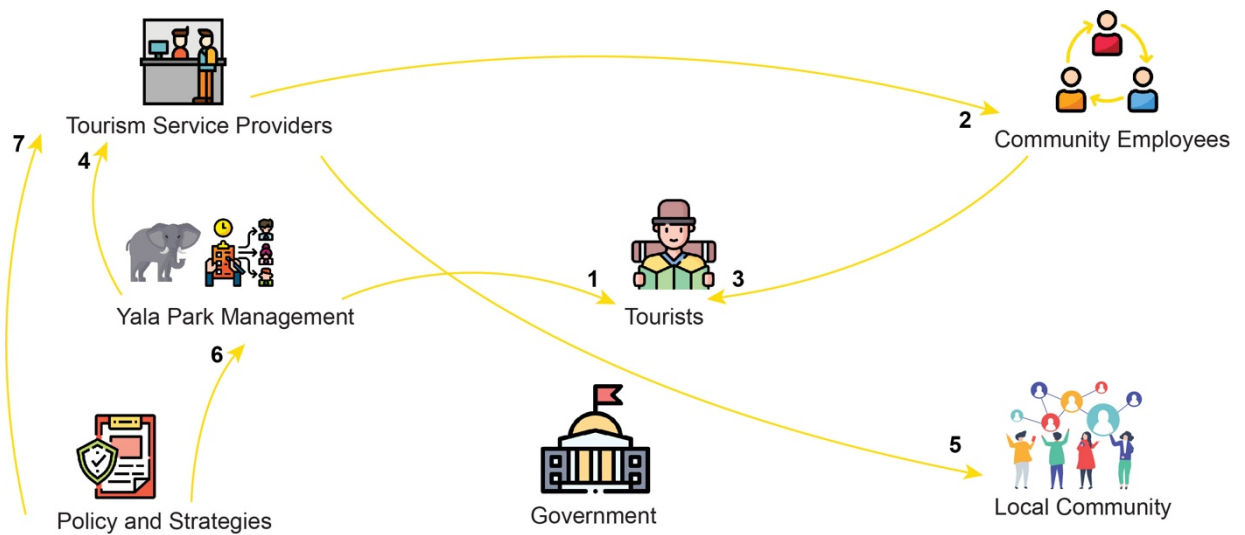
#### **5.3.1 The relationships are based on the flow of products and services**

Figure 5.8 illustrates the relationships between stakeholder groups providing products and services within Yala PA tourism. The primary beneficiaries of these products and services, denoted as tourists (both international and domestic), are positioned as the central customers of Yala PA tourism. This designation is visually represented by three



arrowheads pointing towards the tourists in Figure 5.8. Rather than the entire arrows, the numerical values assigned to the arrowheads indicate the recipient of various elements, such as products, services, financial resources, and information. The references to specific numbers in the text correspond to the respective numerical labels depicted in the figure and are explained below.

**Figure 5.8 Relationships in the delivery of products and services**



Yala park management offers the ‘wildlife tour’ as the primary product available for purchase by tourists. In addition, park management provide safety measures and infrastructural facilities within the park (1). The park caters to pilgrims (both daily and Yatra), who are classified as domestic tourists and benefit from certain facilities the park management offers (1). The park management explicitly provides additional safety measures and disposable rubbish bags exclusively for Yatra pilgrims (1) to uphold environmental conservation efforts within the park.

The tourism service providers are responsible for organising the tours and supplying essential provisions such as food, accommodation, and transportation to PA tourists (2). The local employees play a crucial role in facilitating the connection between tourists and the tourism service providers (3) by serving as jeep drivers, trackers, and housekeepers. These local employees contribute to the overall tourism experience by providing necessary services. Yala park management grants permission to jeep owners to operate safari jeeps (4) to transport tourists to and through the park. A few tourism service providers occasionally contribute to community-based charitable activities; for example, donating stationery to preschools or supporting the development of community facilities within village temples (5). It is important to note that the local community does not

directly interact with the tourists, as their involvement is primarily channelled through the local employees.

Yala park management maintains strong connections with some stakeholders in the policymakers' group, particularly the DWC and the Ministry of Wildlife and Forest Conservation. The Ministry plays a crucial role by providing policies, laws and guidance (6) to govern tourism practices in PAs, ensuring the quality of products and services. The DWC contributes by formulating 5-year plans, managing bungalow bookings for Yala PA, and organising training programmes for wildlife trackers (6). Policymakers offer legal support to tourism service providers (7), exemplified by the Thissamaharama DSD office's responsibility for registering tourism businesses. The regional council examines building plans for tourism enterprises and grants necessary permissions to owners (7). The Road Development Authority issues permits to business owners to display signage along roads (7). The Urban Development Authority does not provide services or products for PA tourism directly (7), although they are responsible for developing tourism infrastructure in the Thissamaharama town area, which holds potential value for PA tourists and other stakeholders.

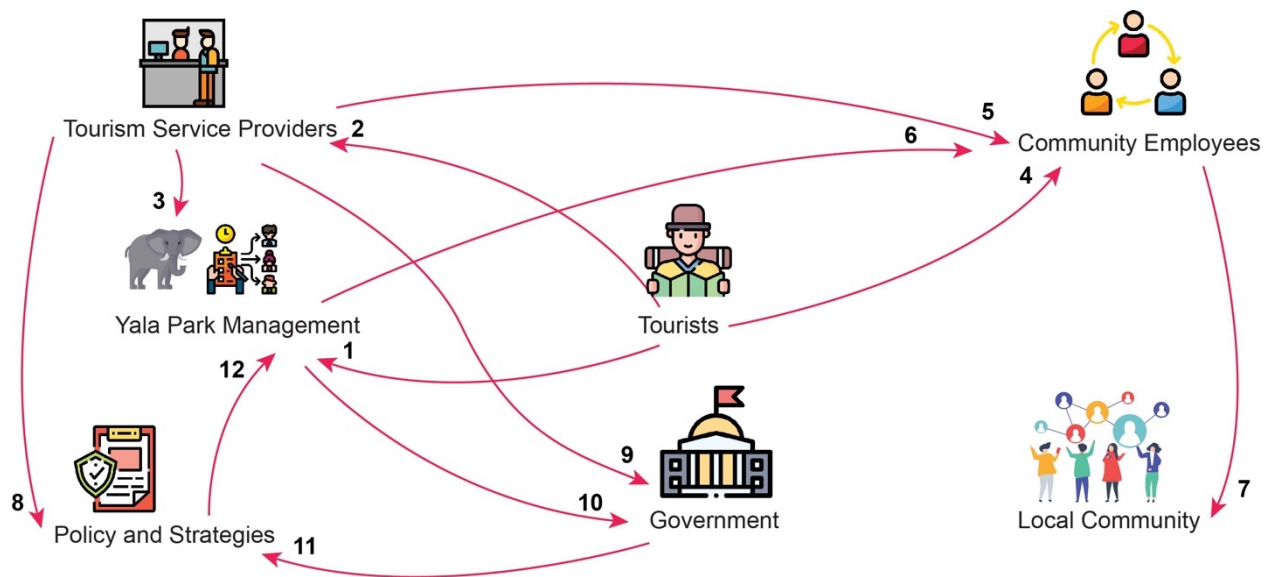
### **5.3.2 The relationships are based on the flow of money**

Figure 5.9 depicts the stakeholders' connections based on the financial flow of Yala PA tourism, and all these links are directed one way. These financial connections are established in response to the respective stakeholder involved in providing services or products. Most financial transactions originate from tourists and are dispersed among stakeholders, namely the Yala park management, tourism service providers and local employees. Independent tourists are those who organise their own trips, purchase tickets (1) and individually cover expenses related to food, accommodation, and transportation (2) by making separate payments to the tourism service providers. A limited number of pilgrims may also remunerate local tourism service providers for their services (2), although this figure remains small compared with the number of PA tourists. When international tourists book tours through tour operators (3), the tourism service providers and park management (for tourist tickets) receive payment through these operators.

At the conclusion of the tour, trackers and jeep drivers receive gratuities, or tips, (4) based on the level of satisfaction expressed by the tourists. In return for services given to tourists visiting PA, tourism service providers compensate their local employees through salaries (5), such as jeep owners remunerating jeep drivers per tour. On the other hand, the Yala

park management provides salaries (6) to the trackers. The income (7) local employees earn is then allocated to their respective households.

**Figure 5.9 Financial relationships in Yala PA tourism**



Any tourism enterprise operated by tourism service providers within the Thissamaharama DSD is obligated to remit payments for business registration and signage (8) to either the Thissamaharama DSD office or the Road Development Authority, both of which are constituents of the policymaker's group. If building construction is necessary, these businesses are also required to apply to the regional council to obtain approval for their plans. Once the company is operational, taxes are paid to the government (9).

Yala PA tourism entails direct and indirect financial interdependencies with other PA tourism stakeholder groups. For example, the revenue generated from admission tickets (10) flows directly from Yala park management to the Government Treasury, daily except the 40% of service charge. The expenses incurred by Yala park management are funded through the Government's annual budget (11) and are channeled via the Ministry of Wildlife and Forest through the DWC (12). The government emerges as the principal beneficiary in Yala PA tourism, primarily through revenue from tourist entry tickets into the park. Tourism service providers and local employees occupy secondary and tertiary positions, respectively, while the local community assumes the lowest priority in terms of financial benefits. A community member who has a small tea shop in the village of Yodhakandiya, where the small boutiques and stalls are located in the Ranakeliya VOD, explained:

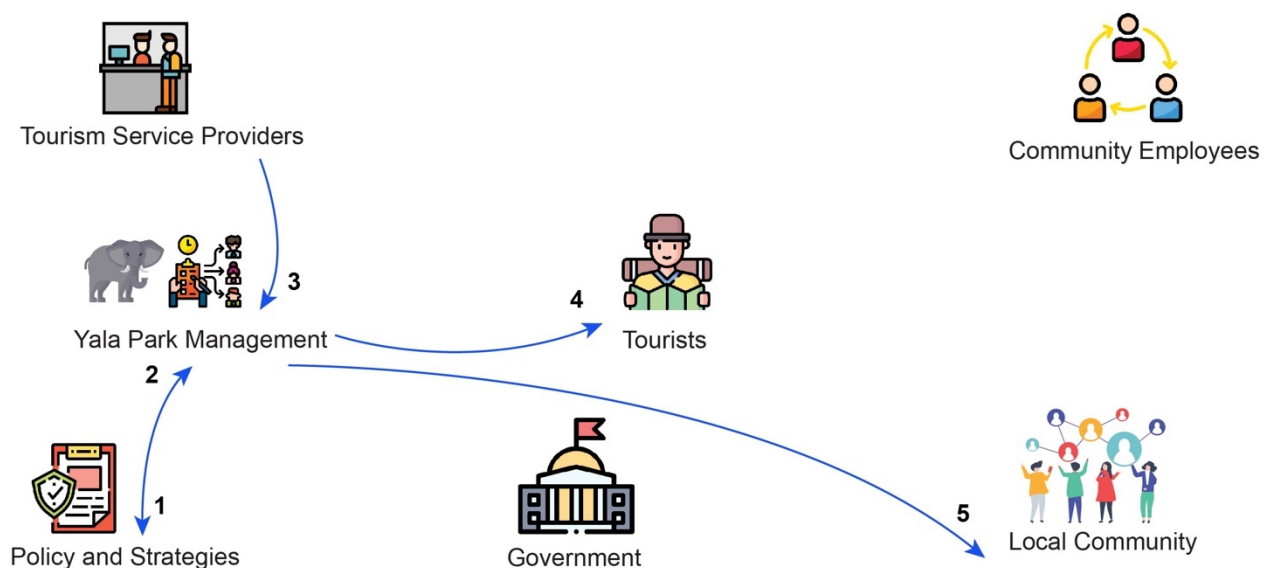
“Foreign tourists stopping at Yodhakandiya junction is very rare. Most of them buy what they need from Thissamaharama town. However, some domestic tourists visit my shop to buy water bottles daily. A jeep driver just stopped to buy a beetle quid (*paan*). That’s all about my business with PA tourism.” (owner of a small tea shop outside the park)

The financial connection between PA tourists and the local community is considerably limited, implying a notable disconnect between the local community and the PA tourism activities occurring in their vicinity.

### 5.3.3 The relationships are based on the flow of information

As depicted in Figure 5.10, the dissemination of information related to Yala and PA tourism is not widely spread among the various stakeholder groups of Yala PA tourism. Tourists can seek general information regarding the Yala wildlife tour through either the Yala or SLTDA websites. The Yala park management collects information on tourist arrivals and income (1), which is then transmitted to the DWC, daily. The Ministry of Wildlife and Forest (2) formulates policies and laws specific to Yala, sent through the DWC to the park management. The DWC shares its 5-year plan and bungalow booking details with the Yala park management (2). During stakeholder meetings organised by the park management at the Yala office, tourism service providers such as jeep owners and hoteliers offer their opinions and submit requests regarding PA tourism (3).

**Figure 5.10 Information relationships in Yala PA tourism**



The Yala park management disseminates information regarding tourism in Yala and the PA to tourists through multiple channels, including their official website, prominently

placed boards at the park entrance, and signage positioned within the park (4). During the Yatra season, the park management endeavours to raise awareness among Yatra pilgrims about preserving nature (4). A park warden offered insights into the environmental consequences and difficulties posed by the arrival of Yatra pilgrims, as well as the measures implemented to address these challenges:

“We have to be thoroughly concerned about the Yatra pilgrims who practise their traditional rituals during the festival season of Kataragama. They spend a few nights inside Yala. As they have followed their traditional route for hundreds of years, we cannot control their access to the park for the sake of conservation. Only we can control the negative environmental impacts they may bring. As their main purpose is a pilgrimage and having low education, we cannot expect a responsible visit from pilgrims. So, we offer them garbage bags and instructions on properly removing their litter.” (park warden)

The park management’s attention to mitigating the environmental impacts caused by Yatra pilgrims is praiseworthy. However, efforts invested in managing the impacts while facilitating the pilgrimage seem a burden to the park management, particularly considering the absence of any financial benefits from the pilgrims.

Occasionally, the park management has made charitable contributions by providing exercise books to children attending Sunday School, a Buddhist school conducted on Sunday mornings, specifically within the temples (5). These exercise books feature informative content about wildlife on their cover pages. One wildlife tracker stated:

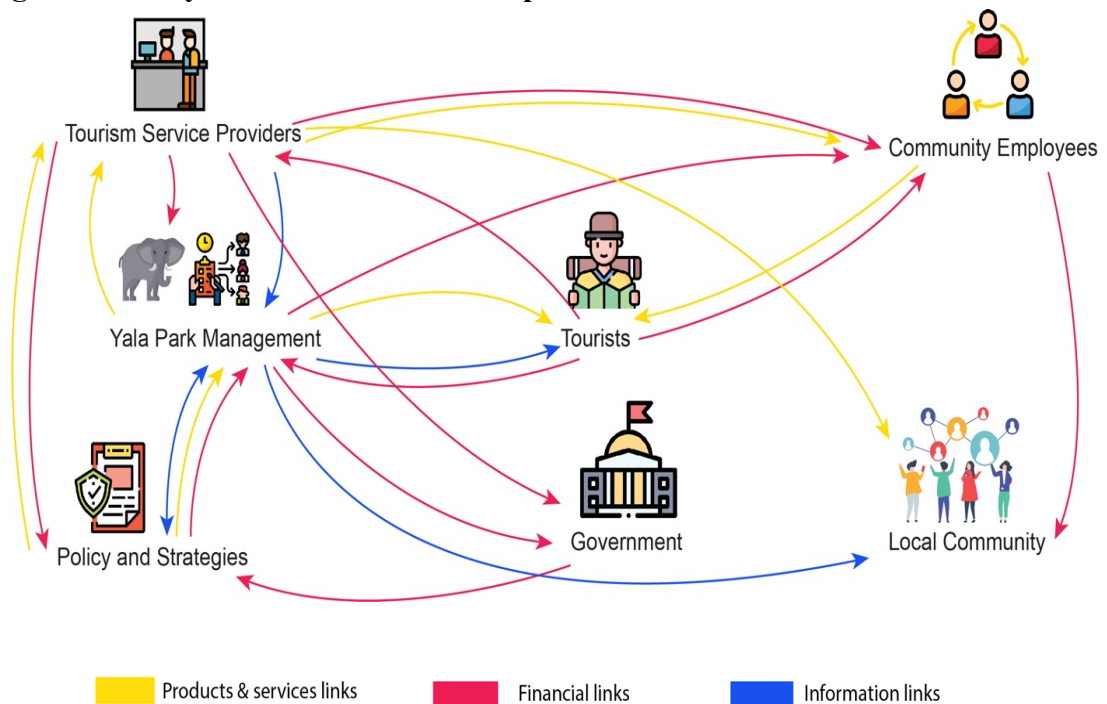
“We do what YWO management staff ask, and we must guide PA tourists who visit the park. Besides that, we have not been informed of the current situation of Yala PA tourism, which officers discussed at their official meetings. Also, I do not think that YWO educates the local community unless it distributes conservation information among school children. The only way the locals can be aware is through the community employees working in PA tourism.” (wildlife tracker)

The dissemination of information by the park management to the local community is primarily focused on conservation matters and does not link to PA tourism. However, it is important to ensure that the local community is well-informed about the PA tourism activities in their vicinity. This is a significant finding due to the potential impact of PA tourism on community livelihoods, to create entrepreneurial opportunities and foster participatory conservation efforts. Despite the active involvement of local employees in PA tourism, park management is failing to adequately share information about PA tourism in Yala with the other PA tourism stakeholders.

### 5.3.4 Dynamics of stakeholder relationships and missing interactions

A comprehensive overview of stakeholder relationships within the context of Yala PA tourism can be identified by displaying the three primary types of relationships, based on the flow of products and services, of money, and of information, in one diagram (Figure 5.11). Notably, the Yala park management emerges as the stakeholder with the most connections, as evidenced by its 12 relationships with other stakeholders in the network. In contrast, the local community exhibits the fewest associations, with only one relation to local employees and another to the park management.

**Figure 5.11 Key stakeholder relationships in Yala PA tourism**

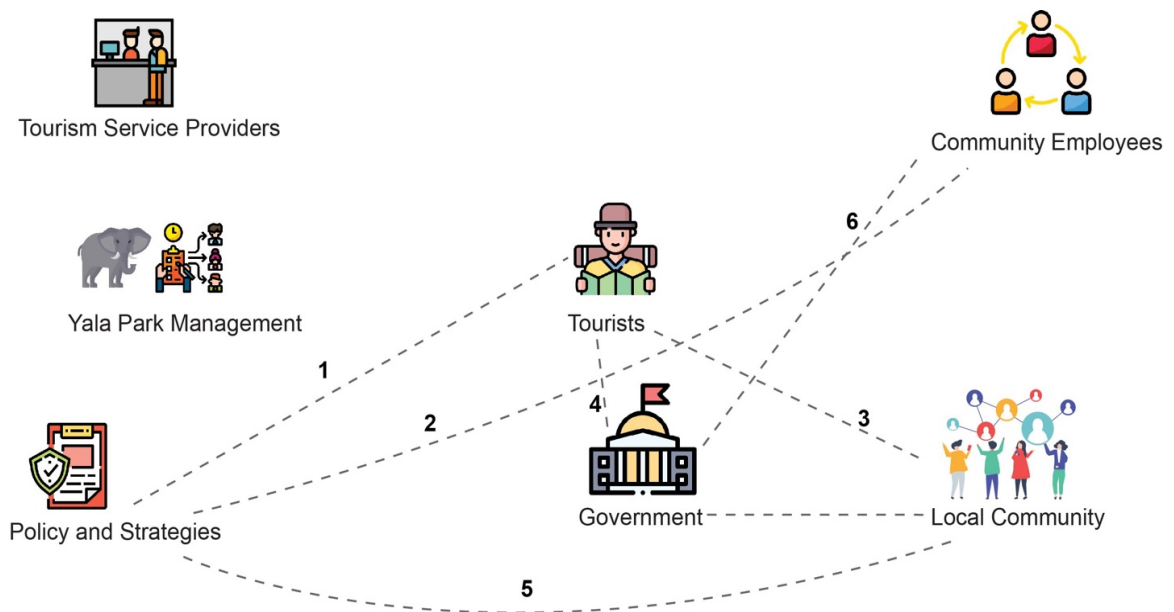


The findings feature a limited number of direct or indirect relationships between tourists and the local community, as tourists predominantly traverse Ranakeliya by safari jeeps to directly access the park, bypassing meaningful interaction with the local community. The tourism service providers do not have direct information-sharing relationships with the government or the local community. However, a two-way information-sharing relationship can be seen between the Yala park management, and there are also products and services links and financial links from the policymakers to the park management.

By integrating the three types of relationships within a single diagram, specific gaps have become apparent in the interconnections between the different stakeholder groups involved in Yala PA tourism. The dashed lines depicted in Figure 5.12 signify these missing links (i.e., of the three types of relationships) within the stakeholder groups.

These missing links indicate the absence of relationships or connections or only minimal levels of interaction between specific stakeholder groups, leading to their disconnection.

**Figure 5.12 Missing links between stakeholders**



The stakeholders interviewed for the research included policymakers and Yala wildlife officers. Interviewees from both these groups of stakeholders were adamant about the value of establishing a direct or indirect link between tourists and the local community (1). A representative from the DSD office remarked:

“PA tourism should be linked to the ground levels, and there should be a mechanism to engage foreign tourists with locals and experience community life. The tourists are like an alliance; they accompany the tour guides and leave after the safari tour to the next destination. The PA tourists who come to this area never have a chance to learn the ancient king’s concept of the traditional settlements of the dry zone: ‘tank pagoda’ and ‘village temple’ in the country, which could be well observed in Thissamaharama.” (a DSD office representative)

Establishing such connections can yield economic advantages for the local community while offering an enhanced, genuine cultural encounter for PA tourists. To achieve this objective, the initial step involves bridging the gap between policymakers and the local community (2) to formulate a suitable strategy. The main obstacle to creating connections between policymakers and the local community is the absence of a mechanism to absorb the community in decision-making processes related to PA tourism. It also would be advantageous to foster a relationship between policymakers and local employees (3) to uphold service quality by supporting their professional growth; for example, by implementing a training programme for local jeep drivers on safari guiding.

The tourism service providers make significant profits through Yala PA tourism, a proportion of which they reinvest in their businesses. According to one local jeep driver, the large-scale safari jeep owners buy a couple of new jeeps every year. Building a relationship between tourism service providers and the local community (4) would help share benefits (e.g., financial benefits generated through the profit of PA tourism) as the local community would dedicate some of their CC to PA tourism. If the financial benefits of PA tourism in Yala were shared with the community, that would incentivise locals to share their cultural understandings and other CC, which in turn would enhance the experience of the PA tourist. Building a direct relationship between the government and the tourism service providers is also essential to control the external leakages from foreign investors and outsiders to increase the flow of benefits to the local community.

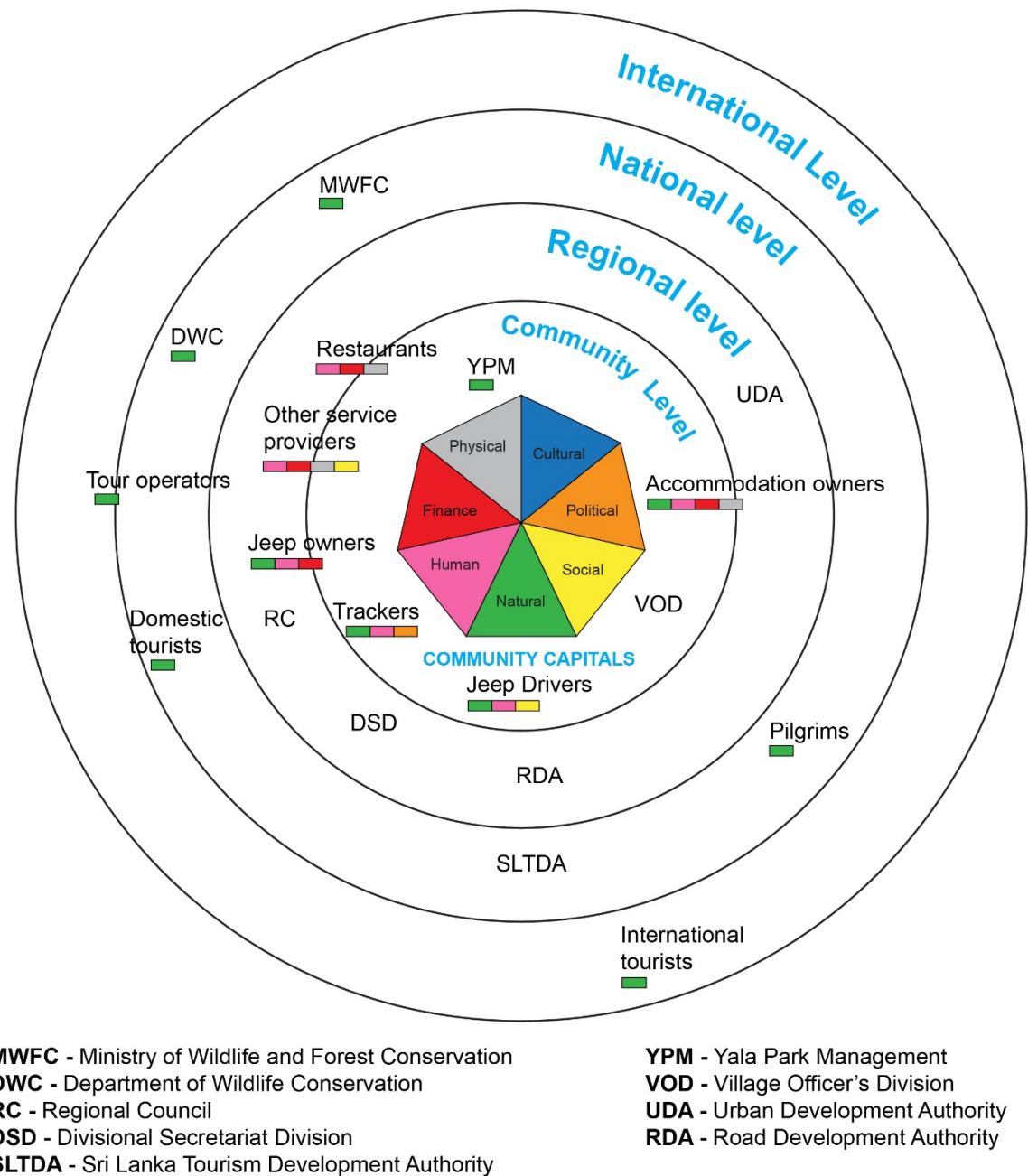
Prior to the establishment of the YWC in Ranakeliya, there existed a loose and tense relationship between the park management and the local community, primarily because the protection of elephants within the park has increased the number of human–elephant conflicts around the park; for example, when local chena farmers try to protect their crops from wandering elephants. This relationship with park management, based on conflict, has resulted in a low level of local engagement in PA tourism and conservation efforts (Heslinga et al., 2019; Snyman, 2019), which can be seen in the limited extent of involvement by the Ranakeliya community in the activities of the YWC. This phenomenon, of limited community engagement, is evident not only in the context of Yala but also in other PAs across Sri Lanka.

#### **5.4 Stakeholders and community capitals**

Stakeholders access and utilise the CC of Ranakeliya to develop their PA tourism businesses in Yala, leading to conflicts of interest when multiple stakeholders express concurrent interest in using common resources, such as land or water. Figure 5.13 illustrates the utilisation of Ranakeliya CC by stakeholders in PA tourism. The figure depicts how these stakeholders engage with Ranakeliya CC at different levels: community, regional, national, and international. The seven colours designate the seven different capitals, and the colour boxes under the stakeholders' labels indicate which capitals they use.



**Figure 5.13 The utilisation of Ranakeliya CC by stakeholders in PA tourism**



For instance, the green colour represents natural capital. Yala PA is clearly important natural capital, with 11 stakeholders saying during their interviews that they used the natural capital of the park for PA tourism. Interest in natural capital is higher among the stakeholders beyond the Ranakeliya community level – while only five local stakeholders focused on natural capital, six stakeholders from outside the community expressed a strong interest in this resource. Human capital is a priority for seven local and external stakeholders, while financial and built capital attracts four and three stakeholders, respectively. Furthermore, a single stakeholder mentioned their access to political capital,

which they acquired through the support of a local politician to obtain land for constructing a hotel. Not one stakeholder mentioned utilising cultural capital, indicating that cultural resources in Ranakeliya do not play a significant role in PA tourism at Yala.

The proximity of stakeholders to the Ranakeliya community align with their degree of interest in engaging with human, financial and built capital at the local level. Private-sector tourism service providers utilise Ranakeliya CC for PA tourism, actively employing human, financial and built capital (e.g., accommodation and jeep owners). This increased utilisation of capital by local tourism service providers reflects the progression of community involvement in Yala PA tourism. In this Figure 5.13, the local community, considered a stakeholder group, is not separately highlighted, as it is already encompassed within the CC category in Ranakeliya, specifically under human capital.

Increasing interest from external shareholders in Ranakeliya's CC for PA tourism development may lead to socioeconomic and environmental challenges, primarily due to conflicts of interest between different stakeholder groups. Some external stakeholders already access Ranakeliya's CC directly; for example, by utilising public infrastructure. In contrast, others resort to access Ranakeliya's CC by indirect means; for example, when campsite providers encroach upon the forest (illegally squat) with political backing.

Two principal approaches exist for outsiders seeking land ownership in Ranakeliya: one involves direct purchase from local landholders, while the other entails obtaining ownership through government organisations. Some government agencies, such as the Road Development Authority, Urban Development Authority, the Thissamaharama Regional Council, and DSD within the policymakers' stakeholder group, do not utilise Ranakeliya's CC but provide services to other stakeholders. Therefore, these agencies remain stakeholders in Yala PA tourism (in this Figure 5.13), playing a vital role in developing tourism facilities, such as infrastructure.

In the CCF, the CC can be categorised into two main groups: non-human (material-based) resources comprising natural, physical, and financial capital, and human-based resources which encompass social, political, human, and cultural capital. The natural capital derived from material-based resources and the human capital derived from human-based resources play a particularly significant role for the Ranakeliya community as they endeavour to harness their CC for promoting and developing tourism in Yala (Wrathall, 2017). From an outsider's standpoint, various stakeholders' perspectives highlight that the

significance of each CC varies based on the perceived value of the respective resource and the specific needs of the stakeholder involved.

In Ranakeliya, the seven forms of CC can be classified into three distinct categories based on their relative importance to stakeholders in Yala PA tourism. This relative importance was determined by assessing the number of stakeholders involved in utilising each capital for Yala PA tourism. The scale of importance ranges from most important to moderately important to least important. The *most important CC* were natural and human capitals, which attracted interest from more than seven stakeholders; the *moderately important CC* were financial, physical, and social capitals, which attracted interest from three to seven stakeholders; and the *least important CC* were cultural and political capitals, which attracted interest from fewer than three stakeholders.

Table 5.1 presents the relative usage of Ranakeliya's CC according to the number of stakeholders utilising each form of capital in the context of Yala PA tourism. The categorisation of these examples is based on insights derived from my fieldwork experience and the analysis of interviews conducted with various stakeholders. The analysis considered how each form of capital is employed in PA tourism, either directly, indirectly or with no connection, as well as the perceived value of each capital to external stakeholders.

Among the stakeholders interviewed, there was a unanimous consensus that natural and human capitals are paramount for PA tourism in Yala. Three-quarters of the interviewees acknowledged the relevance of financial, physical, and social capitals in the context of PA tourism. In contrast, the utilisation of cultural and political capital was scarcely mentioned, with stakeholders rarely associating these forms of capital with PA tourism. For example, this opinion expressed by a monk at the Uddagandara temple highlights the lack of connection between PA tourism and cultural capital:

“...hardly any international tourist visits this temple or the Thissamaharama temple. The community members who work in tourism do not tell the stories to visitors about these cultural values.”  
(monk at the Uddagandara temple)

**Table 5.1 Ranking Ranakeliya's CC based on each capital's utilisation for PA tourism in Yala**

Rank	CC	Examples from Ranakeliya	CC utilisation status	Stakeholders who use the CC
1	Natural	Yala PA, wildlife, land	Widely used	Ministry of Wildlife & Forest   DWC   Tour Operators   Domestic Tourists   International Tourists   Jeep Owners   Trackers   Jeep Drivers   Yala PM   Accommodation Owners   Local Community
	Human	People, education, training, skills, creativity, diverse groups	Widely used	Restaurant Owners   Other Service Providers   Jeep Owners   Trackers   Jeep Drivers   Local Community   Accommodation Owners
2	Financial	Savings, salary, funds, loans, investments	Moderate use	Restaurant Owners   Other Service Providers   Jeep Owners   Accommodation Owners   Local Community
	Physical	Buildings, electricity, water, telecommunication, roads	Moderate use	Restaurant Owners   Other Service Providers   Accommodation Owners   Local Community
	Social	Relationships, networks	Moderate use	Other Service Providers   Jeep Drivers   Local Community
3	Political	Community organisations, leadership	Limited use	Trackers   Local Community
	Cultural	Heritage, celebration, lifestyle	Limited use	Local Community

#### 5.4.1 Stakeholder tensions relating to PA tourism benefits

Issues emerge when multiple stakeholders from different socioeconomic backgrounds interact in the PA tourism context in their efforts to gain economic benefits from Yala (Heslinga et al., 2019). Issues are mainly found in three stakeholder groups: jeep drivers, trackers, and the local community. The conflicts between transport service providers (jeep owners and drivers) and the YWO are highlighted among all the stakeholders' relationship issues due to the legal actions of some jeep drivers and the park management regulations against safari jeeps.

### *Jeep drivers*

According to the president of the Yala Jeep Society in Akurugoda, many problems between the Yala park management and transport service providers lie in the growing number of safari jeeps around the Thissamaharama area. Owing to the significant number of safari jeeps, not all the jeep owners in the area are members of the Yala Jeep Society:

“At first, there were only 74 jeeps in this area when the PA tourism began to grow in the 1990s. Now there are about 1200 jeeps. We requested to limit this growth when the jeeps reached nearly 400. If they had taken the proper measures, the problems would not have grown. We cannot undo the mistake and reduce the number of jeeps, but we must now go for a proper limiting mechanism.” (president of the Yala Jeep Society)

A few years ago, the Yala Jeep Society predicted that Yala’s jeep numbers could increase excessively. The Yala Jeep Society filed a complaint with the park’s management and policymakers, but the authorities ignored it and delayed action to control the situation. It was too late when the park management finally realised the number of jeeps had grown too high. A high volume of jeep movements could have a negative impact on wildlife, and it exceeds the carrying capacity of 600 jeeps per day (according to YWO calculation).

The YWO has issued a registration letter to jeep owners, confirming the completion of safety inspections for their vehicles until 2017. These inspections were conducted to ensure that the safety measures of the jeeps were up to standard. No new jeeps can be registered because the YWO had to halt the registration process when it was halfway through due to political intervention. However, this has not resulted in a halt in the number of jeeps in the park –both registered and unregistered jeeps can still access the park. The president of the Yala Jeep Society mentioned that the influence of regional politicians is the reason for not controlling the increase in the number of safari jeeps:

“Controlling jeeps is not yet in progress. We have already handed over our request documents to the park management, but nothing has been done yet. The only reason is the interference of the politicians. One of the ministers of this region mainly does not like controlling jeeps as he has allowed the people he knows to own jeeps to run a safari transportation service as self-employment.” (president of the Yala Jeep Society)

Until now, proper action has not been taken to control and limit the increasing number of jeeps around Yala. The president of the Yala Jeep Society pointed out that when jeep owners are not under the umbrella of one management organisation, a standard hiring rate is challenging to maintain. This means that some jeep owners charge lower rates, and not

surprisingly, these low-rate jeeps are more popular among many visitors. However, these price-cutting measures are hurting the industry as the quality of the service is now an issue with reduced safety and maintenance in the low-rate jeeps. Furthermore, operators offering low-rate jeeps potentially reduce their costs by employing less-qualified drivers, which can negatively affect the visitor experience.

Due to political interference, Yala park management has been unable to control the increase in jeep numbers around the area. Instead, they have introduced a policy to limit the number of jeeps that can enter the NP each day. A transportation service provider highlighted the issues this policy is causing:

“Only 600 jeeps can enter the Park per day. If 500 jeeps enter the park in the morning, only a 100 can access it in the evening, which leads everyone to try to go in the morning to fit in the daily limit. This further increased the traffic in the morning, whereas hardly any jeeps enter the park in the evenings. Due to this policy, some international tourists have to leave without visiting the park. They cried because they could not stay an extra night in Yala to return the following day. If this happened to a domestic tourist, they would have returned, but international tourists cannot do it, and they get frustrated.” (transportation service provider)

The visitors were dissatisfied, having experienced disappointments due to this policy, and their dissatisfaction creates a negative image of the destination. The traffic has become worse than ever in the park during the morning visiting hours. A park manager explained:

“We keep limiting the jeeps that can enter the park as much as we can. We get great pressure from the transportation service as they elect this area’s regional politician, but we try to manage our best.” (park manager)

This response fails to explain why the park management did not take steps to control the increase in the number of jeeps around the park, nor does it clarify the reason behind the suspension of jeep registration. Overall, it is evident that the park management is facing political pressures that affect their duties, and the park management can only control the number of jeeps that access their jurisdiction. The park management did not acknowledge that they had identified the issues arising from their jeep-limiting policy, such as the heavy traffic in the morning. Figure 5.14 shows the queue of transportation providers and their guests waiting to be allowed entry into the park.

**Figure 5.14 Traffic in the morning for ticketing**



One of the transportation service providers interviewed made further comments on the timing of park management practices to control the traffic within the park and how these policies and practices affect domestic visitors:

“In the past, the park’s gate opened from 6 a.m. until 6 p.m., but now we have to finish the morning tour by 11 a.m. Anyone who enters at 10.30 a.m. does not have enough time to complete the safari. So, they must wait near the river or the beach (the only two places the safari jeeps may stop) for three hours until the evening tour begins at 2 p.m., which wastes time. We asked the Yala park management to break this rule, at least for now. We have minimal domestic visitors (due to the terrorist attack) who come from Kataragama temple after ritual time ends around 10 a.m., but the management never listens. They say we cannot change rules according to your wish.” (transportation service provider)

According to a high-level member of the Yala Jeep Society, this timing strategy was also unsuccessful as it meant visitors wasted their time between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. if they had to enter the park around 10.30 a.m. The Yala Jeep Society considered this strategy a barrier to their members who want to earn some money from the limited number of domestic visitors during this challenging time. Some transportation service providers state this time restriction gave other parks, like Udawalawa, a competitive advantage over Yala. They believe tourists have more options as the same animals exist elsewhere in Sri Lanka.



Another tension in stakeholder relationships around PA tourism is that most jeep drivers try to maximise the tips they receive from tourists by showing them animals like leopards. One jeep owner acknowledged:

“The greediness for tips is a weakness of our drivers because they want more money to survive, so the drivers are eager to show the leopard to international visitors somehow. When a driver catches sight of a leopard, he tends to notify other fellow drivers, which leads to huge traffic in that spot.” (jeep owner)

The problem is that jeep drivers show wild leopards to tourists with the intention of getting tips and the similar views held by the Yala Park management. This further exacerbates the problem of excessive vehicular congestion in specific areas, as they call their fellow jeep drivers to converge at said locations. Figure 5:15 shows safari jeep traffic inside Yala.

**Figure 5.15 Safari jeep traffic in Yala**



*Photo credit: <https://www.srilankatourismalliance.com>*

The jeep owners suggested a solution to park management for this issue which focused on restricting connectivity in the park. While restricted connectivity was successfully implemented for a short time, again the control measure was thwarted by political intervention:

“There is a telecommunication tower in the park, and we requested to disconnect it during the safari times. This initiation went as a pilot work for around a month and was very successful until an order to cancel it came from a higher position. This happens to every step taken for problem-solving in Yala PA tourism.” (jeep owner)



However, there could also be a safety reason for halting this pilot scheme; for example, if there was a jeep accident and medical assistance was required, then having working telecommunications would be critical. Even so, the absence of effective communication and collaboration between park management and jeep owners hinders the successful implementation of management strategies that encompass a range of variables, including but not limited to visitor satisfaction and disturbing wildlife.

Tensions also arise between jeep drivers and park management when the jeep drivers break the rules inside the park, such as exceeding the speed limit. When this happens, park management bans the driver and his vehicle from entering the NP for two weeks. While the jeep drivers know they will be punished for their breach, they are angry with park management since the ban disturbs their livelihoods and they cannot earn income to pay for the vehicle lease. A high-level member of the Yala Jeep Society also complained that park management did not apply its rules consistently across all the stakeholders:

“As we go into Yala daily, we must obey all the rules of Yala park management, but if a well-known officer comes from Colombo, these rules are not effective for them. Conflicts arise between us and park management if we talk against this kind of double standard. For example, a few years ago, a leopard was hit by a high-speed jeep occupied by a former director of DWC. The leopard died, and the park management tried pointing their finger at us (jeep drivers). Luckily, the investigation revealed the truth, and we were exculpated. We also talked to the media, but they have hidden this case as a higher position made this mistake of DWC.” (high-level member of the Yala Jeep Society)

This comment shines a light on the double standards of the rules in the NP, which sometimes encourages misbehaviour by jeep drivers. When community stakeholders become aware that those in management positions demonstrate a lack of respect for rules or exhibit double standards, community stakeholders are also inclined to disregard the rules.

Another factor that causes financial difficulties for the transportation service providers is Yala’s annual closedown during the drought season. A jeep owner described how they had protested when the park management decided to close the NP for three months rather than two in 2018:

“The Yala park management tried to close the park for drought for three months this year, but the parliament has ordered to extend the closing for six months. The reason is that the current government opposes the regional political party here. When the big politicians are in conflict, the small people are pressured; for example, how do we feed our

families if the Yala is closed for such a long period? We went on strike and picketed along with the jeep drivers and families at the Yala park entrance. In response to such pressure, the park management agreed to shorten the closedown to two months.” (jeep owner)

Despite the controversy about the misbehaviours of some jeep drivers, it is worth acknowledging the mission of the Yala Jeep Society, which is to ensure visitors receive exceptional transportation services through a strong collaboration with the park management while also prioritising environmental conservation in Yala. The Yala Jeep Society contributes to conservation efforts by hiring water bowsers to fill the pits to provide water for wildlife during the drought period, collects rubbish and clears roads in the park for free on an annual basis. The Yala Jeep Society feels that such good practices have not received commensurate attention from the media or authorities.

According to the Yala Jeep Society, tensions arise between jeep owners and drivers for several reasons. In 2018 some drivers separated from the Yala Jeep Society and established a separate jeep drivers’ society, the Independent Jeep Drivers’ Association Yala, to make their voices heard. As a jeep owner mentioned, the jeep drivers demanded that their salaries be increased:

“We pay the drivers Rs700 per tour. The jeep drivers requested to increase it to Rs1000. We should get more hires to increase their salary. They receive tips from the tourists/visitors, but we do not.” (jeep owner)

While some jeep owners have a good relationship with some of their employees (e.g., some jeep owners allow the drivers to take the jeep home at night after a shift), the tension over wages remains. Typically, the owner receives bookings for jeep hires and payment directly from the tour operators in Colombo, and then the jeep owner pays the driver. At times, specific drivers in Thissamaharama town come across independent tourists and clandestinely hire them without notifying the owner, resulting in conflicts.

One of the park managers recalled an incidence when the transportation service providers created a minor conflict with hoteliers. A few hotels started providing their own jeep service, but they had to stop it as the local jeep drivers protested by getting in the way and blocking the jeep operations in Yala. The park management stated that they were also not supporting the hotels’ independent jeep services as the initiative was not beneficial for the local community. However, park management also notes that if the neighbouring community provides the jeep service, then the jeep drivers should behave with discipline and provide a quality service by respecting the park’s rules.

### *Wildlife trackers*

Stakeholder tensions related to tipping are not limited only to the jeep drivers but also apply to the wildlife trackers who work in Yala. The trackers work for daily allowances, but their income is highly dependent on the tourists' tips. Tipping is a cultural norm in the Sri Lankan tourism and hospitality industry, practised by both domestic and international visitors. One local-community tracker said he was satisfied with his job:

“I am from the Ranakeliya community and have worked for more than 30 years as a tracker. When I started to work, we paid only Rs100 (USD0.30), and now our daily wage is Rs700 (USD2) per day. On top of that, we receive good tips. We are happy to work with Yala park management; no issue has been raised. More than 60 community trackers work in Yala; most (around 45–50) are from neighbouring villages.” (tracker from the local community)

Despite the tracker's assurance that no issues have been raised so far, a park management officer has confirmed that trackers tend to prioritise guiding international tourists over domestic tourists due to the higher tips they receive from the former.

Tensions among stakeholders about PA tourism benefits also revolve around employment opportunities in Yala. A park management officer commented on the recruitment process for the community employees in Yala:

“When trackers or rangers are appointed from the community, the political supporters are prioritised. Some think employing wildlife trackers from the neighbouring community would reduce poaching, but it sometimes worsens things as they have relatives in the community who are poachers. When we catch a hunter, they have a close relative in here. So, the poachers get freed without being punished. Rangers miss their regular patrols by allowing their friends to engage in illegal activities within the park. So, it cannot be said that the conservation aims of employing wildlife trackers from neighbouring communities are 100% successful in Yala.” (Yala wildlife officer)

Other Park management officers and a Village Officer confirmed that the local community need political support (from regional politicians) to appoint as a wildlife ranger or a tracker in Yala. Poachers from the local community will inevitably have close contact (e.g., a friendship or a relationship) with other members of their local community, including with those who are employed in Yala as, for example, wildlife trackers or rangers. Therefore, some locals do not hesitate to engage in any illegal activity in the park because proceeding with legal actions against poaching has become problematic given that the trackers try to protect the poachers from punishment. According to this officer's opinion, the aim behind employing locals – namely, to protect Yala (e.g., eradicating

poaching) by reducing the local communities' dependency on the forest – has not been entirely successful. The majority of the residents in the Thissamaharama DSD have left school with no formal qualification (see Table 4.2), which combined with their limited training regarding the PA's conservation goals, means that local employees can sometimes behave irresponsibly.

### *Local community*

There is an ongoing discord between the local community in Ranakeliya and the external elites concerning land ownership and its utilisation for PA tourism in ways that inequitably benefit the external elites. At the end of the civil war in 2009, external elites increasingly bought land in the Thissamaharama area, driven by the rapid growth of PA tourism there. Even though the locals cannot prove their legal ownership of the lands around Yala, the Divisional Secretariat has let them continue their traditional chena cultivation because these lands belonged to their ancestors. However, clearing a new forest lot for a new chena is not legal.

The former village officer revealed how the wife of a famous cricketer attempted to encroach on a local's ancestral land:

“The buyer has arranged to backdate the deed for 13 years (illegally) to prove their ownership for constructing a hotel and obtain permissions from government organisations. The land was cultivated until sold last year by a chena farmer, and all these things happen for the sake of money.” (former village officer)

Some outsiders encroach on the locals' land, without paying them any compensation, because these external elites have solid political support. While others rely on the locals' lack of legal documentation regarding ownership of their ancestral chena lands, and use this to bargain down the land's value.

The locals sell their lands to outsiders for low prices, and when the outsiders build a hotel, the locals go there to work. A monk from the Uddagandara temple pointed out that the locals have become servants under the prosperous outsiders in their homeland:

“The people who come from outside gain more benefits through PA tourism than the locals. The people who cultivate chena over generations do not have a licence for their lands to prove their ownership. Still, surprisingly, outsiders arrange deeds within a day or two for locals' lands. Now, the land sells at high prices, and the land value increases just because the people from Colombo buy local lands.” (local monk)

Land prices in the Thissamaharama area are rapidly increasing because the developing PA tourism sector has increased outsiders' interest in the market. As a result, the locals have been priced out of their own homeland. Public access has also been reduced to areas that hold traditionally communal resources, such as water. For example, the monk from the Uddagandara temple commented on how access to water supplies through the Yodha tank has been affected by hotels in the area:

“Now, there is no public access to the Yodha tank. The tank boundary has been encroached upon by hotels to get a scenic view. The thing is, they all have deeds as well. Generally, the tank boundary is a reservation area owned by the irrigation department. How did these hotels get deeds for a reservation?” (local monk)

The local community lack access to resources and have become outsiders in their homeland. Their voices hold no power as government agencies fail to act, while outsiders have the support of politicians.

The demand for pipe water increases when hotels with swimming pools are built in the Thissamaharama area. The Thissamaharama Regional Council has not met the current demand and temporarily stopped supplying water to new consumers. My observations and interview feedback revealed that the piped water and the other water sources are polluted and unsuitable for drinking. The interview participants alleged that kidney diseases have spread in the area in the last five years, which is a phenomenon found in other dry zone areas. The people in this area buy water for drinking and cooking from the purifying centres, which charge them Rs3 per litre. Even though some households have water filters, people experiencing poverty do not have money to buy filters or drinking water. Even though the cause of these kidney diseases is unclear, new community applicants might not be able to obtain pipe water due to the massive demand for water from tourist hotels around the area.

A village officer spoke of an incident of corruption related to encroachment of chena land that belonged to a local farmer. A contractor bribed five officers in different government organisations to obtain the land, which he then dug up for gravel to supply infrastructural development in the area. Another interview participant told of a hotel owner (an outsider) who had received the regional politician's support to obtain the land to build the hotel. In return, the owner has helped the politician by giving him some land and water from his well to develop the politician's housing project.

A village officer also explained that when wealthy outsiders, with political support, build luxury accommodation and illegal campsites within the park, business opportunities in PA tourism are taken from the locals:

“The private-sector accommodation owners made the politicians agree to build campsites or tree houses in the park. The politicians justify the permission because the locals do not have huge investments to build great accommodations like hotels. However, the rich outsiders who come from Colombo benefit from such kind of opportunities. The international tourists go to the luxury accommodations owned by outsiders and not go to the local ones.” (village officer)

The wealthy outsiders are seizing the locals’ business prospects, and as a result, tensions among stakeholders regarding the benefits of PA tourism in the area are intensifying. The following section delves into the influence of power in exacerbating the tensions of benefit sharing among PA tourism stakeholders.

## **5.5 Stakeholder power dynamics**

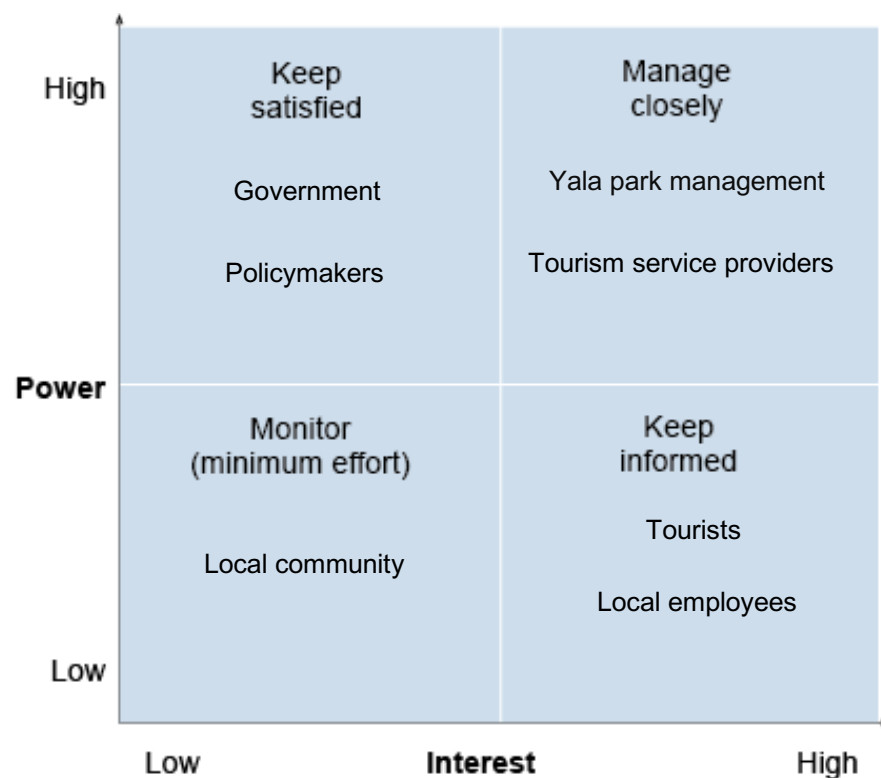
Power denotes the ability of an entity (such as a government, public agency, or business) or an individual to impact the actions of another party (Mannetti et al., 2019). Power is a relative concept that varies according to the stakeholder group and according to individual stakeholders within one group (Saito & Ruhanen, 2017). By examining the different power positions at a group level, this research looks at the power dynamics between stakeholder groups in Yala PA tourism to better understand the power-related issues in sharing the benefits of PA tourism across the Thissamaharama area. Identifying power relationships is essential because when power dynamics are not systematically addressed, they can lead to some stakeholders dominating others and weaker stakeholders being used unfairly, disregarded, or excluded (Brouwer et al., 2013). Abuses or power imbalances can occur before, during and after participation in PA tourism.

According to the interview participants, the tourism service providers (e.g., private-sector stakeholders) have the most financial power in Yala, and so can influence other stakeholders. A jeep owner stated that the local employees’ household income is controlled by the owners of tourism service businesses. Some groups of local employees, like safari jeep drivers, are significant in number, which gives them the strength to negotiate with their employers about their rights. According to the Yala Jeep Society’s president, when the tourism service providers and local employees (e.g., jeep divers and

owners) are united, they may influence other stakeholders like park management or policymakers.

Figure 5.16 shows how the stakeholders' power dynamics in Yala PA tourism can be viewed through Mendelow's stakeholder matrix. The Yala park management and the tourism service providers have high interest and exert significant power, while the pilgrims and the local community have low interest and little power. Tourism service providers have to abide by the regulations imposed by the park management; therefore, they are placed below the park management in terms of power. Government and the policymakers are in high-power positions as they make the higher-level decisions that affect the nation, although they are less interested in PA tourism because they cover other portfolios (e.g., health, education, manufacturing) and not just PA tourism.

**Figure 5.16 Stakeholders' power dynamics in Yala PA tourism**



*Source:* Adapted from Open University (n.d.).

The tourists and local employees, such as wildlife trackers, are placed in a lower power position in the matrix because they have to accept the park management's rules and directions. At the same time, tourists and local employees have a high interest in PA tourism and need to be kept informed by the park management. For example, jeep drivers

should just be notified of park closures (high interest) but do not participate in discussions to decide on park closures (low power).

Meanwhile, members of the local community who are not employees have both low power and low interest. Meanwhile, members of the local community who are not employees have both low power and low interest. This means they have very limited 'stake in the game' in terms of conserving this PA, and so should be monitored by the high-power stakeholders, like Yala park management, to mitigate the risk of their actions having negative environmental impacts.

### **5.5.1 PA tourism stakeholders' power-related issues**

From a power (dynamics) perspective, some issues emerged from the findings as obstacles to achieving sustainable outcomes for and from Yala PA tourism. Of these issues, the three key obstacles are governmental weakness, political interference, and corruption.

#### *Political corruption*

Corruption, defined as the illegal utilisation of resources for personal gain (Duffy, 2014), results in injustice for the local community. The local community, who are the real owners of resources, could be marginalised in their homeland due to corruption, thus impeding the achievement of sustainability outcomes in PA tourism.

Evidence of political corruption was given in some of the interviews when participants complained that outsiders gain more benefits than locals do from PA tourism and that some higher-ranked officers in the YWO or DWC engage in illegal activities with the support of politicians. According to some of the Yala park management staff, the Yala PA had been used for illegal activities like cultivating marijuana (an illegal drug in Sri Lanka) with the support of politicians. A management officer in the YWO alleged:

“In the past, outsiders misused Yala for cultivating marijuana by booking bungalows to come here for watering and fertilising. They are not ordinary people and gained the support from police OIC.” (park management officer)

However, the same officer confirmed that such illegal activities are not happening inside the NP these days.

In 2019, tourist bungalows inside the park could only be booked through the DWC. The management officer further added:



“Yala bungalows offer a paradise of freedom for VIPs in the country. The same customers addicted to this place keep coming back to visit regularly. There is no chance for a newcomer. The bungalow tickets are sold through a raffle, and these regular customers’ trick is to get a raffle ticket. The wealthy stay in Yala as they like wildlife and bathing in the river. A tracker guides them. The tip this tracker might receive is normally Rs25,000, the cook gets Rs20,000, and the room attendant gets Rs10,000. As they receive a decent number of tips, these workers may be willing to do illegal activities upon the guests’ request, like supplying wild meat. The beauty of the wildlife tours that one can see from outside Yala is not really on the inside.” (YWO management officer)

The DWC’s monopoly challenges the rights and equal opportunities of new visitors who wish to stay overnight at Yala. Furthermore, the Yala workers become familiar with these local elites due to their large tips. Therefore, the workers do not hesitate to break the park rules to satisfy these affluent customers, which compromises the conservation efforts of the NP.

Even though the Yala management officer emphasised that their main concern is conservation and tourism is secondary, the other park management staff opposed the warden and commented that PA tourism is the management officer’s priority due to its more significant economic benefits:

“Now, Yala park management tends to do tourism [more] than conservation due to the political interference to gain personal benefits rather than community benefits through PA tourism.” (park management staff member)

According to this management officer, politicians, elites, and higher-ranked officers misuse their power to undertake illegal activities in Yala. They interrupt the duties of honest officers, and the natural resources are still at risk in Yala.

#### *Political interference*

Political interference in PA tourism management adversely affects the independent decision-making of those tasked to manage the PAs, and so compromises the quality of PA tourism products and the conservation of natural resources. Yala park management acknowledges that they face the challenge of political interference due to the lack of strict laws and regulations around management of PAs. This park warden compared the situation in Sri Lanka with that in India:

“Famous Asian NPs allow limited visitors on a daily basis, such as Kanha NP, India. Eighteen jeeps in one zone and only 25 in another zone per day as per the court decision made the daily tourist limit. They

also got political interference in the past. But the law in Sri Lanka is lenient, and no one can influence the political decisions.” (park warden)

A park management officer in Yala gave a different example of political corruption:

“Who permits to build of campsites in the forest? A large amount of money goes to the politicians once every few months. When a new wildlife minister is appointed, his supporters remove the last campsites and replace them with new campsites of the followers.” (park management officer)

A similar example to this is the case of the canteen at the Palatupana entrance. This canteen, maintained by the employees’ cooperative society, provides food for the staff. The current canteen manager is an outsider, and rangers revealed that once the wildlife minister changes, the canteen manager also changes. Every minister wants to give the canteen management contract to his supporter from his hometown. Therefore, the opportunity to run the Yala canteen never comes to the neighbouring community of Yala.

A village officer further highlighted the political interference in Yala park management, sharing:

“The minister can visit the park free for official matters, but when the minister’s friends need to visit Yala, the park management and Yala Jeep Society receive calls and are advised to provide free entrance and transport services to these guests. Officers cannot do anything but follow the order from the minister. The politicians and their people come and stay in Yala for free, taking photos and selling for higher prices and earning a great amount of money.” (village officer)

The village officer points out that the politicians and their associates are misusing the resources of Yala PA by exploiting an easily accessible entrance and subsequently profiting from wildlife photography. This behaviour has caused resentment among other park officials due to the disturbance it causes to the park’s income. However, these officers remain silent as they do not have the power to make their voices heard, and they also do not want to put their jobs at risk by opposing the politicians’ behaviour in the park.

Yala park management officers are required to enforce the laws around the park and poor people in the neighbouring community who break a single rule are punished. For example, if a local driver exceeds the speed limit within the park, park management bans the driver and his vehicle from entering the NP for two weeks, which has an immediate and significant impact on his income. Yet it was alleged that officers also have to ignore large-scale illegal activities related to the natural resources in Yala conducted by higher-ranking

officers or politically supported wealthy outsiders. One village officer was concerned with what seems to be double standards within some aspects of Yala park management. Double standards for the rich and poor has created distrust between the NP and the village, which has the potential to widen the distance between these two stakeholder groups and marginalise the local community from participating in PA tourism and conservation:

“The politicians appoint favourable officers to the wildlife parks. Then exploit the natural resources and earn huge amounts of money by destroying the environment, such as logging, collecting wild medicines and mining gems. The impact of the people in higher positions is more harmful than the poor people on the natural resources. However, the law is only effective for ordinary people, not those in higher ranks. The officers appointed here should be passionate about protecting the natural environment; otherwise, these resources cannot be conserved for future generations.” (village officer)

While the rich misuse their power to reap benefits from PA tourism, there are limited opportunities for the local community to also share in the benefits of PA tourism, due to the unavailability of a mechanism (or mechanisms) to encourage and empower and so involve locals in PA tourism economic activities. As noted earlier, one-third of the Ranakeliya community are members of the YWC, which is run through the YWO. Yet there is no formal flow of PA tourism benefits flowing from park management to the YWC in Ranakeliya. Although Yala park management and some private sector stakeholders do occasionally make charitable donations to the local community (for example, see Figure 6.22, an educational book donated to local school children by the YWO), such donations are isolated and sporadic.

## **5.6 Chapter summary**

Among the key stakeholders of Yala PA tourism, the park management’s role is central and highly influential. Yala park management forms connections and has relationships with the other stakeholder groups through flows of products and services, money and information. Inefficiency and a lack of coordination between government departments have made PA tourism legislation challenging to craft and implement. Strengthening cultural and political capital in the Ranakeliya community is essential for gaining benefits for the broader community through PA tourism in Yala. Understanding the stakeholders’ power dynamics is crucial to utilising CC for PA tourism development and to ensure the benefits of PA tourism are more equitably shared.

The involvement of all stakeholders is essential to design a broader vision for community development. Sharing of PA tourism benefits more equitably with the wider community

will also help to engage the local community in conservation (Kline, 2017). The engagement of local employees in Yala has resulted in a range of complex and diverse issues that have significant implications for PA management. Political forces and corruption in natural resource consumption and inequitable sharing of the benefits of PA tourism have added to the community's marginalisation in Yala PA tourism. The next chapter brings the voice of the Ranakeliya community to the fore, as I examine their perspective on how the impacts of Yala PA tourism are shaping the lives and experiences of those in their local community.

## **Chapter 6: THE IMPACTS OF PROTECTED AREA TOURISM ON THE LOCAL COMMUNITY**

*“... money is not always the most important thing. Human feelings sometimes outweigh wealth, and we may fail to buy a favour with money. As for money, enough is enough”*

- Uncle Fang from Zili Village-China  
(as cited in Zhuang et al., 2019, p. 13)

This chapter aims to understand the impacts of Yala protected area (PA) tourism on the local community in Ranakeliya. The chapter draws on the survey and participatory mapping exercises conducted by engaging with local community members in Ranakeliya. The first section of this chapter provides an overview of the participants who participated in the survey and the mapping exercises, focusing on understanding their socioeconomic background. The following section presents the impacts of PA tourism on the local community, with economic, sociocultural and environmental impacts being reviewed at both household and community levels. The chapter then examines community knowledge of Yala conservation goals and the community's willingness to participate in conservation initiatives. The final section reveals community perceptions of stakeholder conflicts in Yala PA tourism, including specific issues between Yala PA and the local community.

The previous chapter drew the picture of the Ranakeliya community capitals and how various stakeholder groups approach and consume these capitals to develop Yala PA tourism. The different types of links and power relationships between these stakeholder groups were also discussed. This chapter focuses on the study's key stakeholder group, the local community, and opens a space for their voices.

### **6.1 Profiles of the community participants**

#### **6.1.1 Socioeconomic background of the survey respondents**

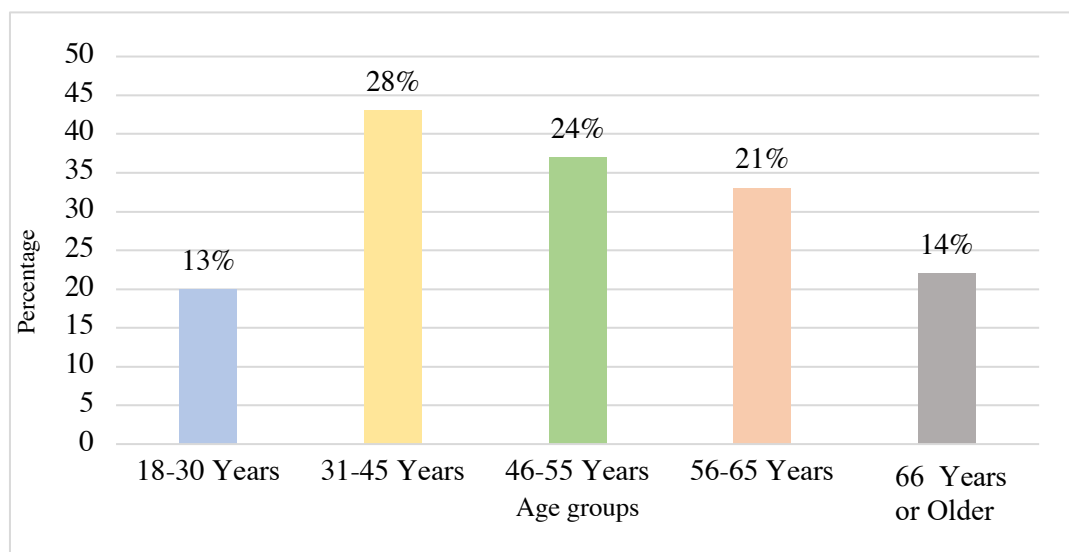
This section presents the demographic characteristics of the residents of Ranakeliya who participated in the household survey, including their gender, age, education level, period of residency, occupation, income, and PA tourism-related employment. It also presents their household demographics, such as the number of members in their household.

The survey covered 156 of households, which represents nearly half of all the households in Ranakeliya. More females (58%) than males (42%) participated in the survey.

According to the Thissamaharama Resource Profile data, Female unemployment (21%) in the Ranakeliya community is three times greater than male unemployment (7%) (Thissamaharama DSD, n.d.). PA tourism offers employment opportunities for men and women in the local community, both directly in a PA tourism business (e.g., jeep driver, housekeeper) and indirectly through a job that services PA tourism businesses (e.g., washing hotel laundry). It also creates opportunities for the entrepreneur to set up their own businesses as additional sources of income.

The largest proportion of the survey respondents (28%) were in the 31–45-year age group (Figure 6.1). When this group was combined with the next age group, 52% of the survey respondents were aged between 31 and 55 years, when people are usually at the peak of their working lives. The smallest proportions of respondents were in the 18–30-year group (13%) and the 66 years and older (14%) age group. Covering respondents from all age groups helps balance viewpoints by avoiding bias (Basarić et al., 2016).

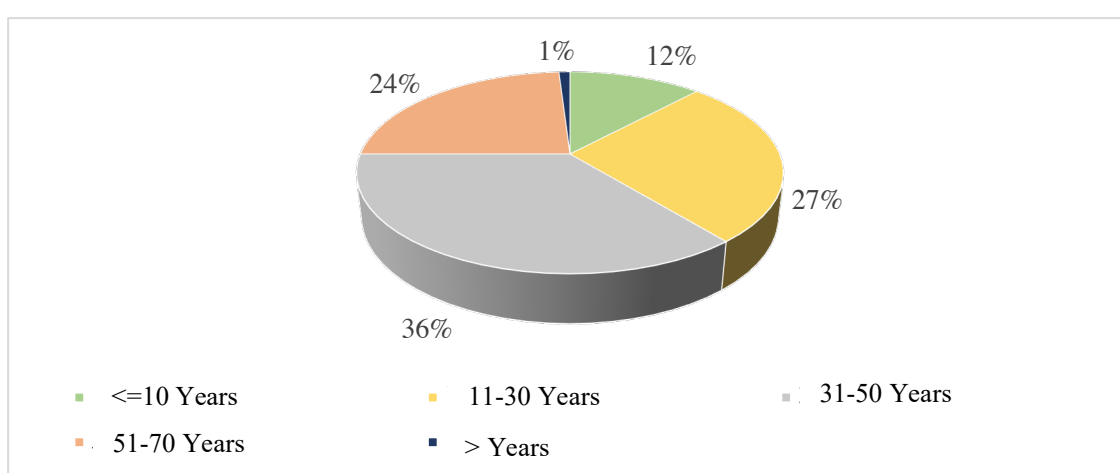
**Figure 6.1 Age groups of the Ranakeliya community survey respondents ( $n = 156$ )**



The majority of the respondents are long-term residents in Ranakeliya, with 88% having lived there for more than 11 years at the time of the survey in 2019. This is advantageous because long-term residents' respondents are well-versed in answering questions about their community. Almost a quarter of the respondents had lived in Ranakeliya for between 11 and 30 years, and the same proportion of respondents had lived in Ranakeliya for between 51 and 70 years. Figure 6.2 shows the length of residency of the survey respondents.

Sixty per cent of the respondents were born in and now live in Ranakeliya, and the remaining 40% had migrated there. Thirty-one per cent of the female survey respondents were migrants who came to Ranakeliya after marriage. In traditional Sri Lankan society, the bride is expected to stay in her husband's house, which is also common practice in Ranakeliya. Eight (5%) of the respondents had migrated to Ranakeliya for work, although only two individuals had migrated to Ranakeliya for PA tourism jobs. From the household survey data, it can be concluded that employment in PA tourism is not a significant attractor for new residents.

**Figure 6.2 Length of residency of the Ranakeliya community survey respondents**  
(*n* = 156)

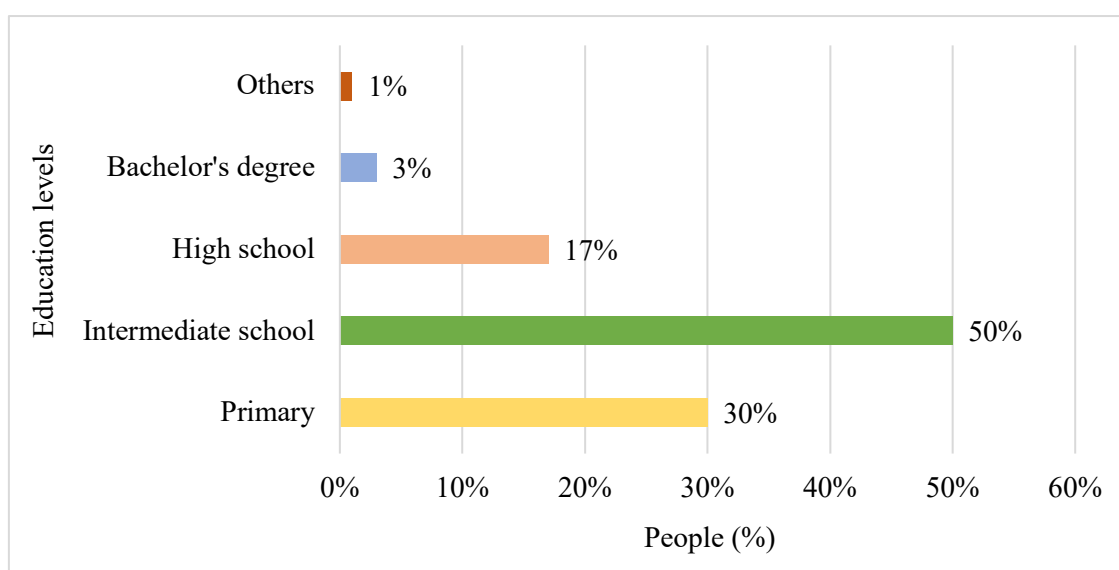


Eighty per cent of the survey respondents had not completed their high school education, a proportion that is consistent with the census data which shows that 83% of the population of Thissamaharama had not completed high school (Thissamaharama DSD, n.d.). Thirty per cent of the respondents had studied only up to primary level, and a further 50% only as far as intermediate school (see Figure 6.3). Fewer than one in five (17%) have a high-school-level education, and only five (3%) have completed a bachelor's degree. The lack of formal education among the residents of Ranakeliya severely compromises the community's ability to use its CC for social development.

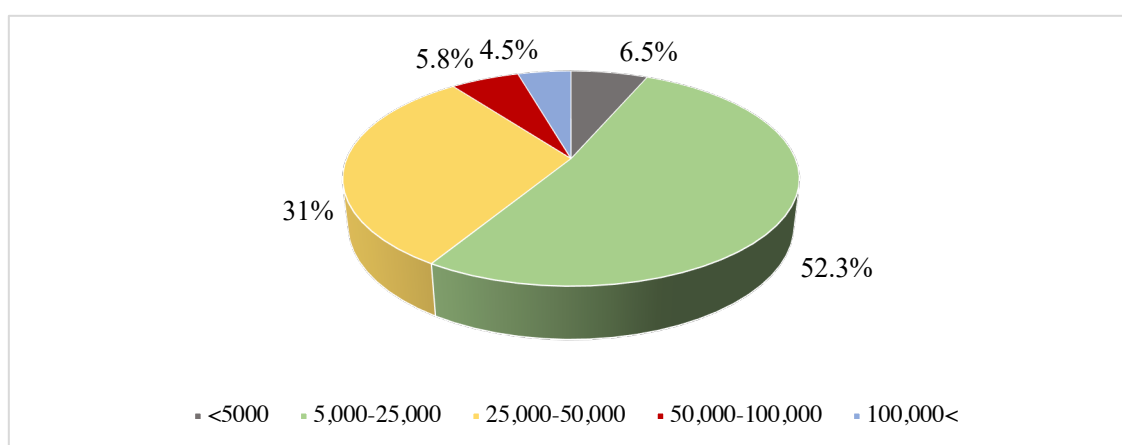
Nineteen per cent of households who participated in this survey suffer from extreme poverty (earning less than USD1.9 (Rs50) a day), and 44% live in moderate poverty (living on less than UDD3.10 (Rs400) a day). This means nearly two out of every three families in the survey household (63%) were poor in terms of their monthly income. The majority of respondents (52%) said that their total monthly household income lay between USD25 and USD125 (Rs5000–25,000) (Figure 6.4). Fewer than 5% of respondents said

their income was higher than USD500 (Rs100,000), in 2019. The number of low-income earners is high in Ranakeliya, which is also common in other villages within Thissamaharama DSD. According to the yearly census data, approximately 60% of households earn less than Rs25,000 (USD125) per month. The census data for 2018 also showed that Ranakeliya had an extreme poverty rate of 20% and a moderate poverty rate of 43% (Thissamaharama DSD, n.d.), mirroring the proportions found within the survey sample.

**Figure 6.3 Education levels of the Ranakeliya community survey respondents  
(*n* = 156)**



**Figure 6.4 Total monthly household income of the Ranakeliya community survey households (Rs) (*n* = 156)**



Nearly a quarter (24%) of the respondents named agriculture as their primary occupation (Table 6.1), and many of them are involved in chena cultivation. Almost 14% of the



respondents were self-employed, and around 13% were labourers. Around 10% were unemployed, and another 9% identified themselves as entrepreneurs. The total number of people working in the PA tourism sector is not recorded at the Ranakeliya community level, and it is impossible to compare these sample characteristics with the broader population. However, the data do highlight that PA tourism jobs are not widely spread in the community.

**Table 6.1 Primary occupations of the community survey respondents in Ranakeliya (*n* = 156)**

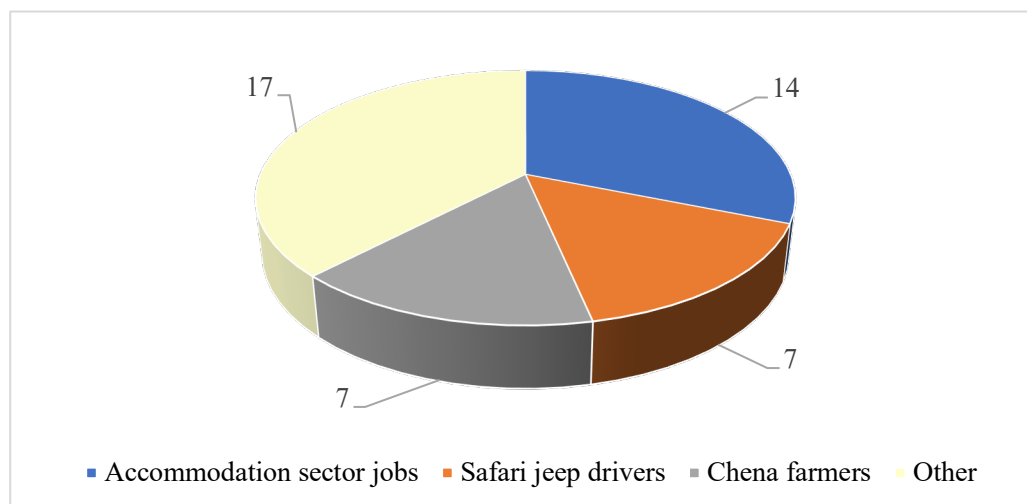
Occupation	%
Agriculture	24
Self-employed	14
Labourer	13
PA tourism-related job	12
Unemployed	10
Entrepreneur	9
Other	8
Government sector employee	7
Fishing	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

The survey comprised 156 households, with the number of members per household ranging from one to seven. One respondent from each household participated in the survey and 54 households (35% of the households surveyed) reported having 69 individuals engaged in PA tourism-related economic activities. Of these individuals, 45 worked directly in PA tourism jobs, while 24 worked indirectly. Figure 6.5 represents the number of household members (*n*=45) who work directly in PA tourism. The community members with jobs directly related to PA tourism were mainly working in the accommodation sector jobs (14), as safari jeep drivers (7) or were selling agricultural products to PA tourists (7). Fourteen other jobs directly related to PA tourism: four of the respondents who said they were working in the accommodation sector were owners of accommodation businesses, and two were engaged in upper-level positions in hotels like a receptionist and a chef. The remaining eight respondents were in lower-skilled roles like housekeeping, cleaning in at Mattala airport, kitchen help, and hotel security.

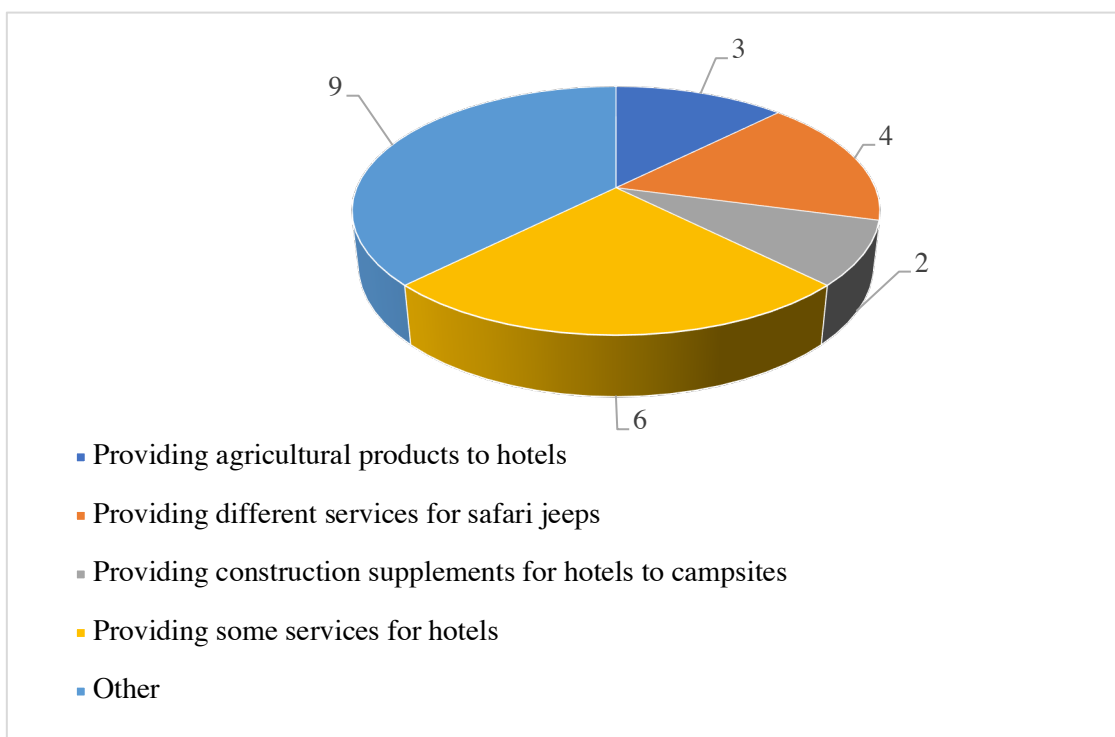
Twenty-four of the respondents worked indirectly in PA tourism. Six provided services to hotels or campsites (see Figure 6.6) – for example, electric repairs, DJ music, laundry

or carpentry services – while another four supplied services to safari jeeps; for example, repairing jeep seats and motor mechanics. Three of the respondents were chena farmers who supplied agricultural products to hotels, and two sold construction materials to hotels or campsites. Nine other respondents provided their service or products to people or places directly linked to PA tourism; for example, selling tea for safari jeep drivers and selling non-chena products, like salt, to hotels.

**Figure 6.5 Respondents' direct employment in PA tourism ( $n = 45$ )**



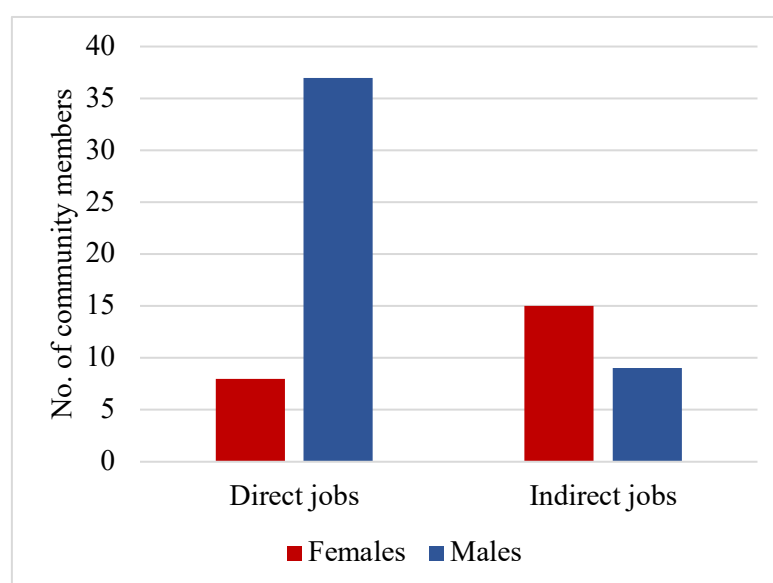
**Figure 6.6 Respondents' indirect job involvement in PA tourism ( $n = 24$ )**



Males dominate those who are directly employed in PA tourism in Ranakeliya. Eight females and 37 males are directly engaged in PA tourism-related work (Figure 6.7). However, while female participation in direct PA tourism jobs is low, more women than men work indirectly in the sector – fifteen females but only nine males were employed in jobs indirectly involved in PA tourism. These data highlight the significant contribution of PA tourism in supporting women’s indirect employment within the community.

**Figure 6.7 Gender of community members engaged in PA tourism for work**

**(*n* = 69)**



### 6.1.2 Socioeconomic background of the mapping exercises participants

Twenty community members selected through the survey were invited to participate in the mapping exercises. The 20 community members were divided into two groups, based on whether their jobs were related or not to PA tourism, resulting in 10 members in the ‘PA tourism group’ and 10 in the ‘Non-PA tourism group’. Those in the PA tourism group had been working in PA tourism for between 10 and 50 years, while those who were not working in PA tourism at the time of the exercises had lived in Ranakeliya for between 30 and 75 years. This section provides an overview of the participants’ socioeconomic background of the mapping exercises.

Table 6.2 summarises the socioeconomic background of the six male and four female participants who were engaged in PA tourism jobs. Two were aged between 18 and 30 years at the time of the mapping exercises, six were aged between 31 and 55 years, and two were older than 55 years. One participant had only received primary-school level of

education, six had received intermediate-level education, and three had attended high school. Seven were directly involved in PA tourism jobs, and three work indirectly as a laundry worker, farmer or a food supplier. Seven of the participants earned between USD125 and USD250 (Rs25,000–50,000) per month at the time of the exercises, two earned between USD250 and USD500 (Rs50,001–100,000), and one earned more than USD500 (Rs100,000). Two of the females earned between USD250 and USD500 (Rs50,001–100,000), but the other two were in the lowest income bracket of between USD125 and USD250 (Rs25,000–50,000) per month. In terms of income, there was no connection between the participants' jobs and their educational qualifications; that is, the data did not show that higher educational qualifications brought more income to those working in PA tourism group.

**Table 6.2 PA tourism group in the mapping exercises**

No. of participants	Gender	Age group	Education	Employment	Income (Rs) per month
1	Male	66<	Primary	Laundry worker	25,000–50,000
2	Male	18–30	Intermediate	Safari jeep driver	25,000–50,000
3	Female	56–65	Intermediate	Farmer	50,001–100,000
4	Female	31–45	High school	Food supplier	25,000–50,000
5	Male	18–30	High school	Safari jeep driver	25,000–50,000
6	Female	31–45	Intermediate	Restaurant owner	25,000–50,000
7	Female	46–55	Intermediate	Airport cleaner	50,001–100,000
8	Male	31–45	High school	Accommodation owner	>100,000
9	Male	31–45	Intermediate	Accommodation owner	25,000–50,000
10	Male	46–55	Intermediate	Accommodation owner	25,000–50,000

The gender breakdown of participants in the group who were not engaged in PA tourism jobs was the same as in the other group, with six male and four female participants (see Table 6.3). Four participants were in the 31–45 age category, two were aged between 46 and 55, and four were older than 55. Two have only a primary-level education, while two have bachelor's degrees. There were three farmers, two housewives, one businessman, two teachers (one retired), one dressmaker and one development officer.

All the participants in the non-PA tourism group were 31 years or older, whereas there were two participants in the PA tourism group aged between 18 and 30. There were also four participants in the non-PA tourism group older than 55 years, whereas only two of

the participants in the PA tourism group were in the older age categories. This age comparison between the two groups indicates that the younger generation tends to work in PA tourism-related jobs.

**Table 6.3 Non-PA tourism group in the mapping exercises**

No. of participants	Gender	Age group	Education	Employment	Income (Rs)
1	Male	56–65	Primary	Farmer	5000–25,000
2	Male	<66	First Degree	Retired teacher	25,000–50,000
3	Male	56–65	Highschool	Businessman	5000–25,000
4	Female	31–45	Intermediate	Housewife	5000–25,000
5	Female	56–65	Intermediate	Housewife	25,000–50,000
6	Female	31–45	Highschool	Dressmaker	5000–25,000
7	Male	46–55	First Degree	School teacher	25,000–50,000
8	Male	56–65	Primary	Farmer	5000–25,000
9	Male	46–55	Highschool	Development officer	<100,000
10	Female	31–45	Intermediate	Farmer	5000–25,000

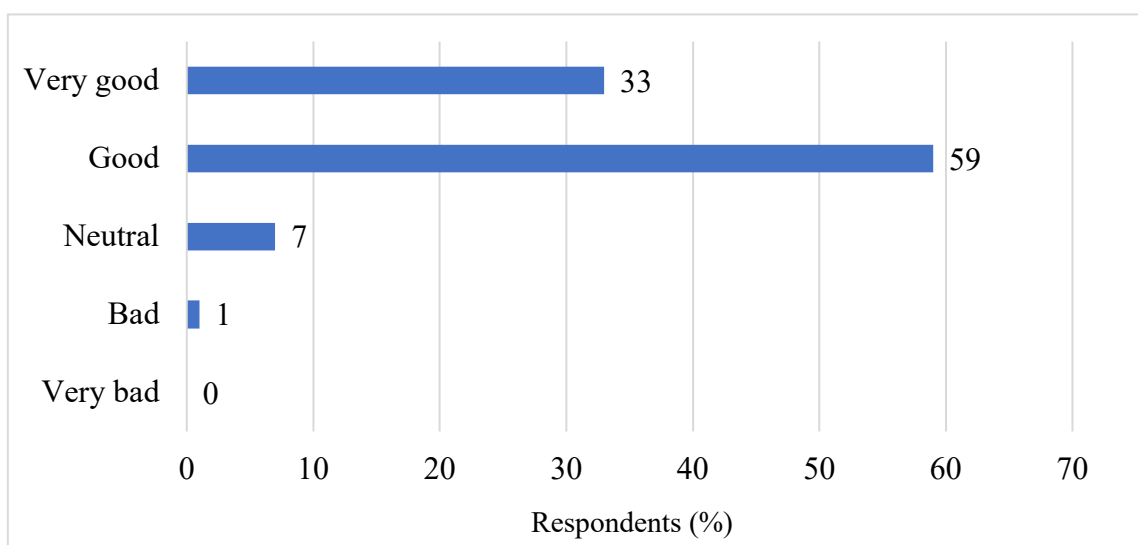
Comparing the education level and income categories, the PA tourism group earns higher income through engaging in PA tourism-related jobs even though they are less educated than the non-PA tourism group.

## 6.2 PA tourism impacts on the community

Most of the community members who participated in the household survey (59%) said that Yala PA tourism was good for their community (see Figure 6.8). A further 33% stated very good. Only one survey respondent said bad, while seven were neutral, and none of those surveyed stated very bad.

The respondents were then asked *how* they thought PA tourism in Yala impacted their Ranakeliya community. Table 6 4 shows that nearly half of the respondents (47%) stated that new jobs were created for villagers, and 43% considered the tourism industry had improved their household economy. Ten per cent of the respondents noted the destruction of the environment, but none mentioned any cultural impacts due to Yala PA tourism.

**Figure 6.8 Perceptions of the overall impact of PA tourism on the Ranakeliya community ( $n = 156$ )**



**Table 6.4 Community perception of how PA tourism in Yala impacts Ranakeliya**

	%
New jobs were created for villagers	47
Improving the household economy form PA tourism income	43
Destruction of the environment	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

*Note:* 123 of the 156 survey respondents gave answers to this question. Each respondent is only allowed to give one response (=> total = 100%).

Table 6.5 shows the changes in the community noticed by local people from the Tissamaharama DSD once PA tourism development re-started after the end of the civil war. The majority mentioned that the infrastructure facilities have developed. The same number of respondents (19%) have seen a growth in Tissamaharama town and tourist accommodation facilities. Seventeen per cent of others that the number of safari jeeps in the Tissamaharama area had increased in the past decade.

**Table 6.5 The changes PA tourism has made in the Tissamaharama area**

	%
Infrastructure facilities have been developed	45
Accommodation facilities have been developed	19
Tissamaharama town has been developed	19
Safari jeep numbers have increased	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

*Note:* 135 of the 156 survey respondents gave answers to this question. Each respondent is only allowed to give one response (=> total = 100%).

### 6.2.1 Economic impacts

As shown in Figure 6.9, most respondents (95%) agreed that “Yala PA tourism positively affects the economy of your community”. Only 5% of respondents expressed a neutral opinion, while none disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

**Figure 6.9 “Yala PA tourism positively affects the economy of the community”**  
(*n* = 156)

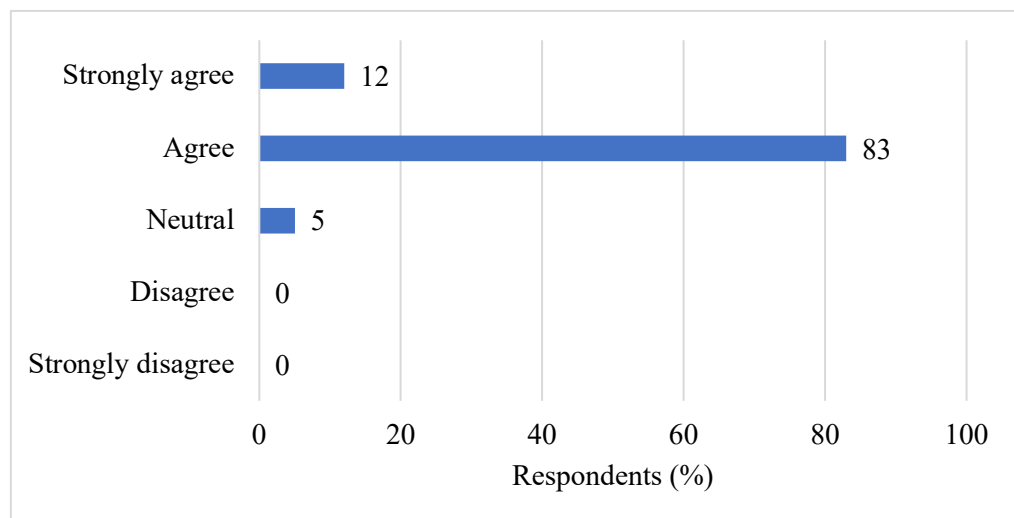


Table 6.6 depicts how the community respondents felt about the economic benefits of PA tourism at the community scale. In order to gain the most clear picture of how they feel about the economic impacts of PA tourism the respondents were prompted to mention the most significant factor related to the economic impacts of PA tourism. The most commonly cited benefit was that PA tourism helps create new jobs in the community. One out of four community members mentioned stabilising the household income as an economic impact of PA tourism.

**Table 6.6 Community perception of the economic impacts on the community**

	<b>%</b>
Creating new jobs related to the PA tourism sector	41
Stabilising the household income	25
Developing self-employment and small-scale markets in PA tourism	14
Providing opportunities to sell harvests to domestic PA tourists or hotels	14
Forming a solid customer base for other industries	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

*Note:* 152 of the 156 survey respondents gave answers to this question. Each respondent is only allowed to give one response (=> total = 100%).

Developing self-employment and small-scale markets related to PA tourism was noted by 14 respondents, and the same number of respondents said PA tourism had created demand to sell local products to PA tourists or hotels. Six percent of the respondents thought that PA tourism was helping to form a solid customer base for other industries because of the rising PA tourism sector; for example, constant orders come to the hardware shops from the construction sites to build tourist accommodations and campsites.

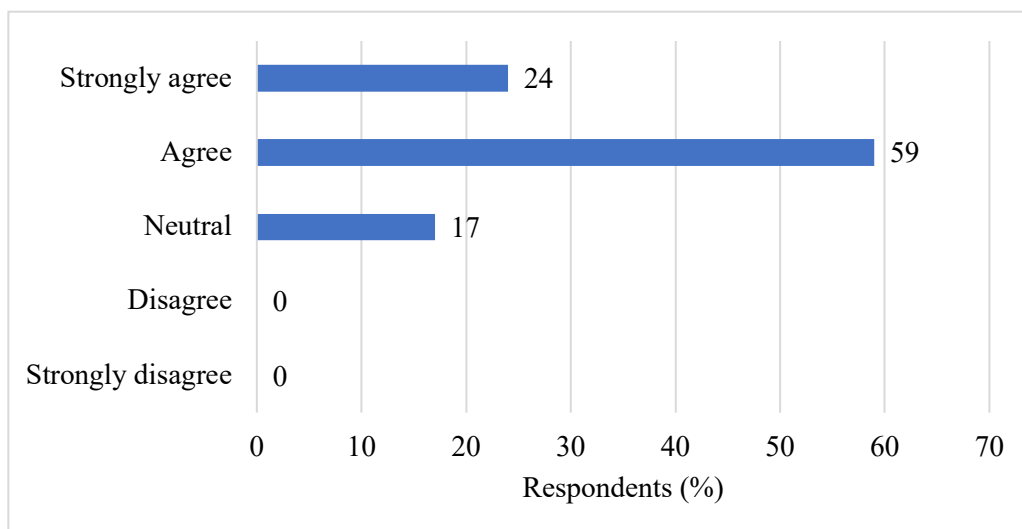
Moving from a focus on the economic impacts of PA tourism on the community to the economic impacts on households in Ranakeliya, the respondents were asked whether they agreed with the statement: “PA tourism is economically beneficial for the household” (see Figure 6.10). Fifty-four of the 156 respondents (35%) had at least one member of their household (nearly always a family member) who was working (directly or indirectly) in the PA tourism sector. Over half (59%) of those 54 respondents with household members working in PA tourism agreed that Yala PA tourism is economically beneficial their households, while another 24% strongly agreed with the statement. Approximately one in five of the respondents (17%) held neutral opinion. None of the community respondents disagreed with this statement that Yala PA tourism is economically beneficial for households.

All 54 respondents who had had at least one household member working (directly or indirectly) in the PA tourism sector emphasised that PA tourism is a source of household income, and 15 stated that PA tourism-related jobs provided them with a permanent income for their household. Forty-five (83%) of the respondents said that their PA

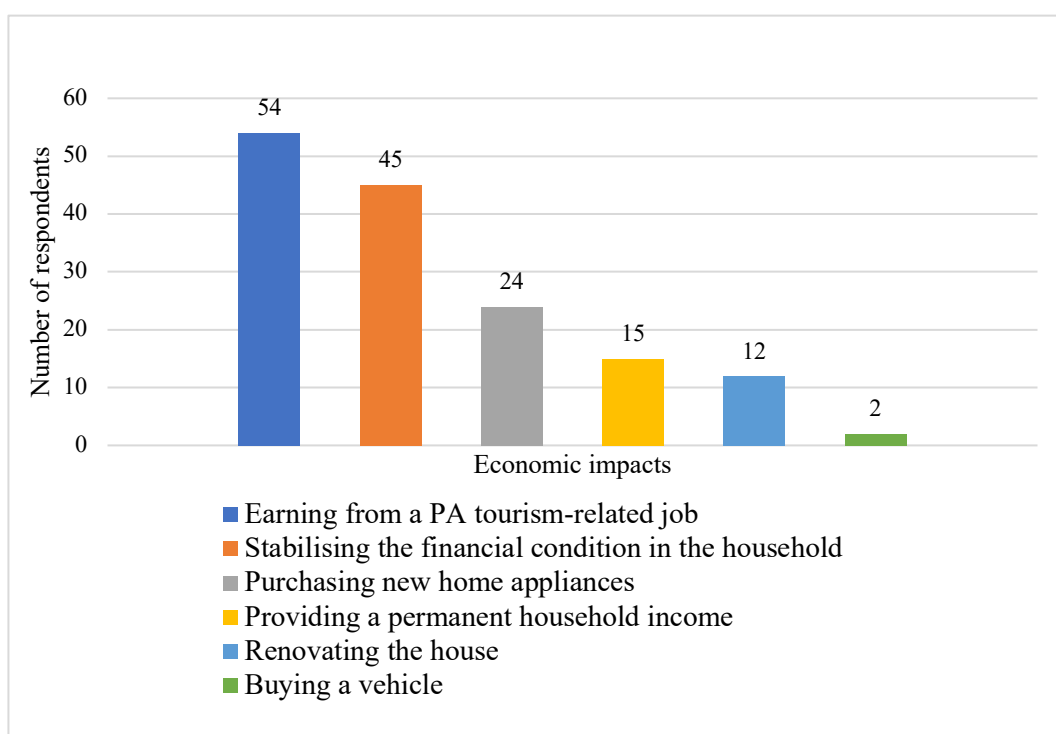


tourism-related job had stabilised their household's financial situation. This was evident in that 12 households had been renovated, and 24 families had bought new appliances for their homes, while two could now afford to purchase vehicles. Figure 6.11 shows the economic impacts of Yala PA tourism on the households of those respondents who had had at least one household member working (directly or indirectly) in the PA tourism sector.

**Figure 6.10 “PA tourism is economically beneficial for the household” ( $n = 54$ )**



### 6.11 Economic impacts of Yala PA tourism on their household ( $n = 54$ )



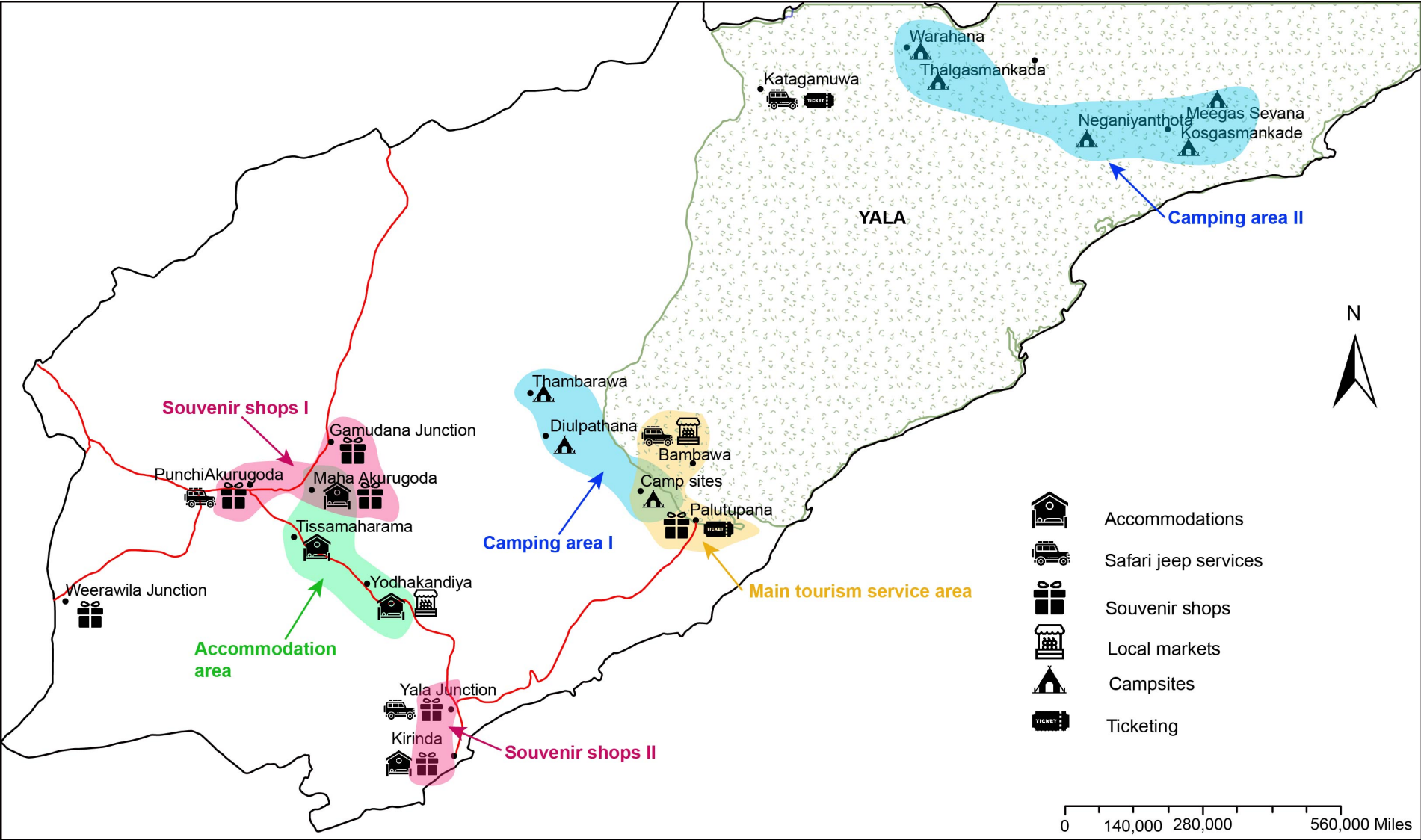
The mapping exercises also revealed information relevant to the economic impacts of PA tourism on the Ranakeliya community. Those who joined the mapping exercises knew where PA tourism-related economic activities are located. The members with jobs relevant to PA tourism marked 11 sites, while the group of non-PA tourism participants identified eight locations. Seven locations were common to both groups: Punchi Akurugoda, Maha Akurugoda, Thissamaharama, Yodhakandiya, Kirinda, Yala junction and Bambawa. Figure 6.12 shows that the PA tourism-related activities identified by the mapping exercise participants as being economically important are primarily associated with main roads, junctions, and town locations.

These PA tourism-related economic activities can be grouped in a five categories:

- (i) *Ticket sales* for visitors takes place at two entrances to Yala, at Palatupana and Katagamuwa (The third entrance to Yala, called Galge, is not located in the Thissamaharama district; that is, is outside the base map).
- (ii) *Safari jeep parks* are scattered in a few locations near the entrances to the park, such as Yala junction and Bambawa, and the jeep businesses are mainly based in Punchi Akurugoda.
- (iii) *Accommodation* in hotels, motels, bungalows is centred around Thissamaharama and Kirinda, while campsites are located near Palatupana and inside Yala (camping areas I & II).
- (iv) *Souvenir shops* are located in Kirinda, Weerawila junction, Gammudana junction, and Maha Akurugoda. They sell products woven from palmyra leaves, seashell products, wooden animal decorations and batik (tie and dye) products. Figure 6.13 is the souvenir shop at the Palatupana entrance to Yala; the shop is maintained by the YWO. The locally woven palmyra bags are displayed for sale and produced by local women in neighbouring villages.
- (v) *Local markets* at Yodhakandiya and Bambawa sell local agricultural products, like fruits, vegetables, curd and fish, mainly to domestic tourists.

The main entrance to Yala, Palatupana, was identified as the main tourism service area as all five categories of PA tourism-related economic activities take place there.

Figure 6.12 Economically important locations for Yala PA tourism in Thissamaharama DSD



**Figure 6.13 Souvenir shop, Yala Wildlife Office, Palatupana**



**Evidence confirmed that PA tourism is economically beneficial for the local community**

PA tourism offers significant opportunities to members of the local community to start a business and become an entrepreneur. A chena farmer in the non-PA tourism group in the mapping exercises stated how chena farmers found a market for their chena products by selling directly to PA tourists:

“In Bambawa, the wives and children of farmers set up small frame tables along the road to sell a variety of chena products, such as king coconuts and boiled corn. This setup allows them to directly sell their products to tourists visiting the area, bypassing any intermediaries in the process.”  
(chena farmer in the non-PA tourism group)

This reflects the disintermediating effect of the tourism industry; for example, by removing the middleman for local food producers. Disintermediation presents an avenue for local chena farmers to tap directly into the large domestic tourist market and potentially provide vegetables and fruits to tourist hotels in the vicinity of Yala. Figure 6.14 shows a local market located on the Thissa-Kirinda road which sells chena products (i.e., vegetables and fruits).

**Figure 6.14 A local market by the Thissa-Kirinda road near Yala**



On the other hand, a jeep driver in the PA tourism group noted that PA tourists (foreign tourists in particular) hardly buy anything from local markets:

“The foreign visitors just go to Yala and Bundala and then leave right after without spending time buying anything from here. They never buy anything in Yodhakandiya shops in Ranakeliya, and if they want to buy something, for example, a water bottle, they buy it from Thissamaharama.”  
(jeep driver)

This jeep driver’s observation holds significant relevance for tourist groups opting for round trips facilitated by a national tour guide, as such tours often involve visits only to major cities and well-known tourist destinations, leaving minimal opportunities for interactions with local communities. Conversely, based on feedback from various respondents to the community surveys, tourists who plan their own itineraries or identify as backpackers tend to purchase goods from small local markets.

PA tourism has paved the way for women who used to be housewives to join tourism in the workforce and support the household economy. Seeta, a middle-aged woman who had participated in the mapping exercises, said:

“Lots of women in Ranakeliya have found new job opportunities in the tourism industry. Some housewives do part-time jobs in hotels while



managing their household work. Their workplaces also provide them with food and transport services for their convenience.” (participant in the mapping exercises)

PA tourism has had a positive impact on the socioeconomic conditions of local women by providing employment opportunities, thereby empowering them economically and promoting gender equality.

Rani, a 45-year-old mother of one who works at a tourist accommodation provider in Ranakeliya, recalled how working for an accommodation provider has helped her and her family overcome times of hardship and illness, strengthened her skills, and provided income to help further her daughter’s education:

“I was a housewife until my husband got a heart attack. He needed to do urgent bypass surgery. My husband was a cattle farmer, and we were not financially stable. Then we had to get a loan to afford the surgery. Afterwards, I decided to work as my husband could not do hard work after recovery. Now I am the chef here at a large camping site. They trained me to cook the cuisines of different countries. There are three owners [outsiders] of this tourist accommodation, and they often visit this place. They are so kind and supportive of the workers here. I have one daughter, and I could send her to a private university to become an English graduate, which I cannot afford without this job. At first, we were not aware of private universities until the owners advised.” (accommodation worker)

Rani not only managed to overcome the sudden financial and health-related challenges her family encountered but also found stable employment and embarked on a new career path by engaging with PA tourism. Rani's employment in the tourism industry has significantly enhanced her family's socioeconomic position. Moreover, the newfound social connections that Rani established through her job broadened her perspectives, leading her to discover new educational opportunities for her daughter. This quote serves as an illustrative example of how PA tourism has effectively enhanced human, financial and social capital within the Renakeliya community.

Sumana is a 55-year-old housewife who worked abroad as a servant and is now running a homestay named Samanala, upstairs of her home (Figure 6.15). Women’s employment in the PA tourism sector is an alternative solution for mothers who may otherwise need to go abroad

(often to Middle Eastern countries) to work as a housemaid, leaving their children behind with husbands or grandparents.

**Figure 6.15 The Samanala homestay, owned by a local housewife in Ranakeliya**



Safari jeep driving is another example of direct employment in PA tourism. According to the safari jeep drivers who attended the mapping exercises, there are between 30 and 40 safari jeep drivers in Ranakeliya, and two safari jeep owners. Other safari jeep drivers work for wealthy jeep owners outside Ranakeliya. Some owners allow trustworthy drivers to take the safari jeep home. The driver is allowed the jeep for personal use without disturbing the safari rides in Yala.

The wife of one of the safari jeep drivers described the benefits her family have gained through PA tourism:

“Before the Easter attack, my husband goes on safari rides daily. Half-day tours: one in the morning and one in the evening, mostly with foreign tourists. Apart from the salary, he received good tips from the tourists, and our life was very comfortable financially. We renovated the house, bought new electric appliances like washing machine and fridge, could look after our parents by spending money for their medication.” (wife of a safari jeep driver)

This quote illustrates the significant benefits the family of a safari jeep driver had experienced from PA tourism before the Easter attack. Following this terror attack, the tourism industry in Sri Lanka had come to a sudden halt due to security concerns and political uncertainty in the country. As the fieldwork was conducted between July and September 2019, the security situation at that time limited the observation of tourism activities in the study area. Nevertheless, conversations with local individuals employed in the industry revealed their profound financial dependence on PA tourism.

According to various members of the local community who had participated in the mapping exercises, the lives and financial situation of young people have changed with the development of PA tourism in Yala. An elderly farmer, Banda, commented on the way young people could now easily find employment, something not available to him in his youth:

“The young generation of our community can easily find a job in a tourist hotel or safari jeep. Various job opportunities had widely opened up in PA tourism, which was unavailable when we were young. There are no factories here. The only option we got was cultivating chena for those not educated. You should own land; if not, chena cultivation is not a possible job either. Finding a full-time and permanent job was hard, so many people used to do one-off odd jobs in the past.” (elderly farmer)

This farmer was saying that Yala PA tourism is a solution for youth unemployment. The data collected from my fieldwork in Ranakeliya reveals that most young people leave school early to find a job, before they even have a formal qualification (see Table 4.2), a finding that is similar to those from other studies in developing countries (Zuilkowski et al., 2016). I met two friends who had left school after Ordinary Levels to work at a Yala campsite. Many survey respondents in response to an open question mentioned that young males leave school early to work as safari jeep drivers. While increasing employment opportunities in the PA tourism sector has an immediate impact of improving the financial position of the youth of Ranakeliya, the fact that these young people are leaving school early with no or only minimal formal educational qualifications means that opportunities to further improve their socioeconomic position long-term will be limited.

I found a father and a son who are running a laundry that cleans the linen from tourist hotels around the area. (Figure 6.16). The son expressed his opinion about his family business, his



passion for preserving their traditional occupation, and how their expansion into the PA sector has brought the family a good income:

“I am continuing the laundry job I received from previous generations, and I decided to provide my service only for the tourist hotels as it is profitable. We have built a large house, own a few vehicles, and provide three jobs for our neighbours to work in our laundry. I am happy with the journey we have been through with regard to PA tourism, and we have not lost our traditional passion for work.”

**Figure 6.16 A locally owned laundry in Ranakeliya**

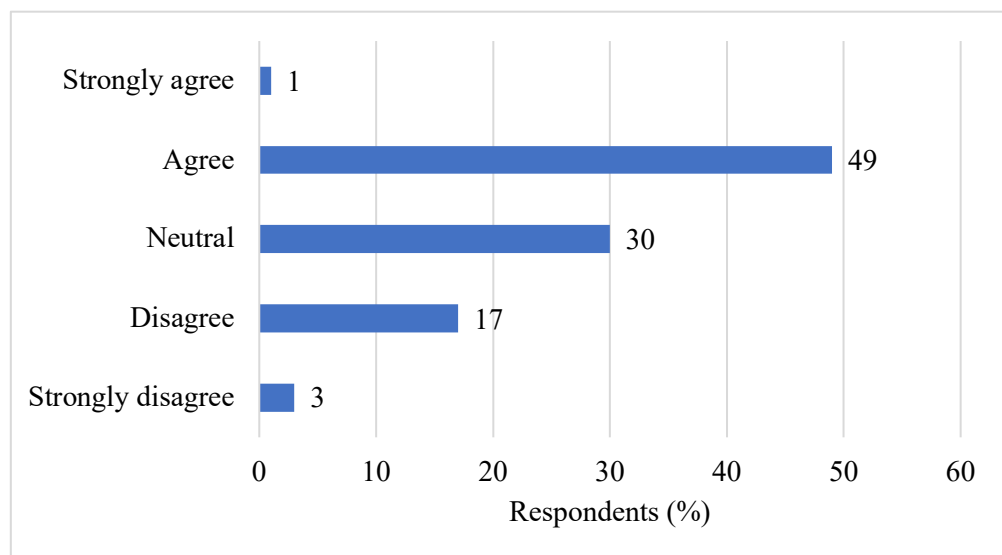


Traditional society in Sri Lanka is built on a caste system of social (and economic) stratification, a system that has been in existent since ancient times. Culturally, people who wash for the 'noble' people are deemed to be in a lower caste and so are less respected, even in modernised society (Udayanga, 2018). By modernising their traditional occupation (e.g., by using washing machines and driers), employing local people and improving their household situation, this laundry family has gained a good reputation in their community owing to their financial status and the house they have built. They have improved their circumstances, both socially and economically, by indirectly engaging in PA tourism in Yala.

### 6.2.2 Sociocultural impacts

Fifty per cent of the survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Yala PA tourism positively affects the cultural dimensions on the community (Figure 6.17). For example, a mapping exercises participant said that a Christian hotel owner has encouraged cultural harmony and interdenominational understandings by inviting the Ranakeliya community to an overnight spirit chanting led by the Buddhist monks in the village temple. However, one in five respondents believed that PA tourism has a negative impact on the cultural dimensions of the Ranakeliya community.

**Figure 6.17 “Yala PA tourism positively affects the cultural dimensions of the community” ( $n = 156$ )**



Both social and cultural impacts of Yala PA tourism are blended in the respondents' opinions given in the Table 6.7. Most of the respondents (62%) believed that PA tourism has no negative sociocultural impacts on their community.

**Table 6.7 Community perception of the sociocultural impacts of PA tourism**

<b>Sociocultural impacts</b>	<b>%</b>
There are no negative cultural impacts	62
Changing village culture	12
Youth tend to follow foreign styles and fashions	10
Drug addiction	10
Private-sector tourism service providers help village children's education	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

*Note:* 112 of the 156 survey respondents gave answers to this question. Each respondent is only allowed to give one response ( $\Rightarrow$  total = 100%).

The chief monk of the village temple commented on the effects of PA tourism on cultural norms:

“Compared with beach tourism, the negative cultural impacts of PA tourism on the local community are less as the international tourists do not interact directly with villagers. However, tattoos, hair dying and wearing an earring are popular styles among young safari jeep drivers, which are influenced by foreign tourists' styles.” (chief monk)

Ten per cent of the household survey respondents mentioned that the youth tend to follow foreign styles. Other community members also confirmed that mixing with foreign tourists has influenced some safari jeep drivers in terms of their hair and clothes styles. Such styles among jeep drivers could also be a result of broader cultural influence; for example, from popstars and social media. Twelve per cent mentioned that the Yala PA tourism causes changes in the village culture, which could be considered a negative cultural impact. The smallest percentage of respondents (6%) mentioned that PA tourism supports the education of village children, which is a positive social impact. These respondents mentioned that PA tourism accommodation providers, such as Elephant Pass and Wild Panthera, have donated stationery for school children and toys for the village preschool.

Drug addiction among youth was raised as an example of a negative social impact of PA tourism by 10% of the respondents. A participant in the mapping exercises helped to explain

this finding from the survey further by commenting on the drug-related cultural effects of PA tourism:

“There are abandoned lands between the village and Yala near where I live, and such abandoned places are misused for exchanging drugs between tourists and local dealers. The easy availability of illegal drugs around this area puts the school children at risk of addiction.” (local community member)

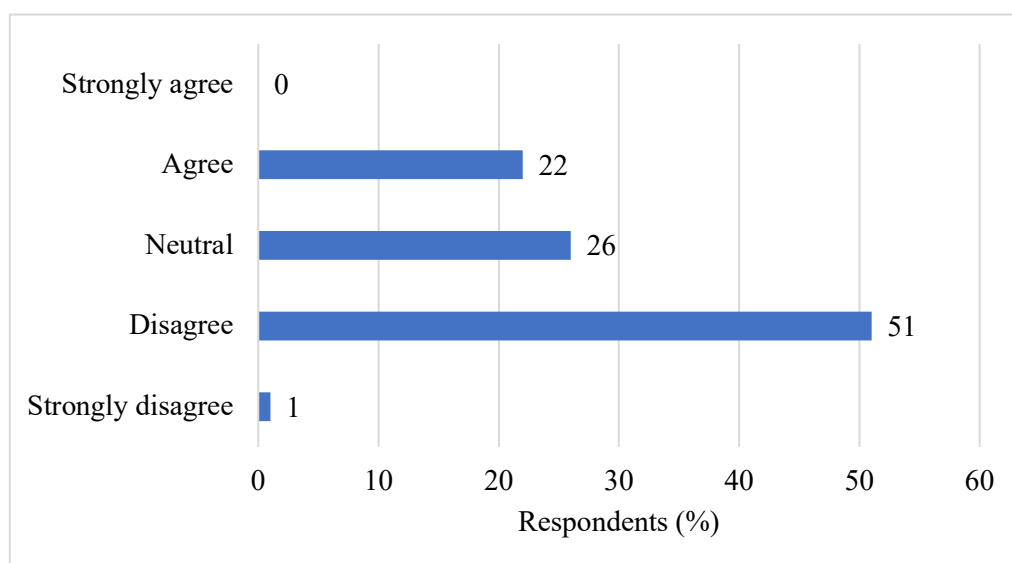
A few survey respondents were also of the opinion that PA tourism creates a market for drug dealers. The survey data revealed the PA tourism increases the demand for illegal drugs and encourages drug transportation due to the high number of visitors coming to this area.

### **6.2.3 Environmental impacts**

The community survey respondents were asked to state whether they agree with the statement “Yala PA tourism positively affects the environment in your community”. Most respondents disagreed (51%), while 1% of others strongly disagreed (see Figure 6.18). However, 22% of respondents believed that there are positive ecological effects of PA tourism in their community, and 26% held a neutral opinion. Around half of the respondents may not understand the adverse ecological effects PA tourism brings to Yala.

The respondents were also asked what they believe to be the environmental impacts of Yala PA tourism are (see Table 6.8) and the respondents were asked to state only the most important environmental impact according to their understanding. Just over one-third of the respondents (37%) stated that PA tourism does not affect the environment due to the regulations. Rubbish disposal inside Yala rate was mentioned by 23% of the respondents, while deforestation resulting from construction and safari jeep traffic within the park was also a significant concern to 17% of the respondents. Approximately 6% of the respondents identified air and noise pollution as contributing to the adverse environmental impacts of Yala PA tourism.

**Figure 6.18 “Yala PA tourism positively affects the environment in your community”**



**Table 6.8 The environmental impacts of Yala PA tourism**

Environmental impacts	%
PA tourism does not affect the environment due to the regulations	37
Rubbish disposal in the forest has increased	23
Deforestation due to construction is increased	17
Too much trafficking safari jeeps inside the park	17
Air and noise pollution has increased inside the park	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

*Note:* 142 of the 156 survey respondents gave answers to this question. Each respondent is only allowed to give one response (=> total = 100%).

A retired teacher in the non-PA tourism group believed that the negative environmental impacts of PA tourism-related are due to the mismanagement of the rubbish disposal:

“Land belonging to the regional council is used to dumping waste in the Thissamaharama area near Yala PA called Kithalalanda. The hotel waste was also brought here by the regional council tractors. Many wild elephants, buffaloes, wild boars and dogs come every day. When wild elephants roam in the evening, people are scared of using the road near the dumping site. Some local guides bring tourists here to watch elephants.

Even the tourists cannot see elephants inside Yala, and this place has become a place where a few wild elephants roam often.” (retired teacher)

Figure 6.19 shows the land pollution of rubbish dump at Kithalalanda, where elephants frequently roam and consume rubbish. The potential harm that consumption of this type of food can cause to wild animals is a concern. Despite a warning issued by the Regional Council (Figure 6.20), private rubbish trucks, including those from hotels, continue to dump city waste at this site. Furthermore, the general appearance of the dump is unpleasant for tourists. Thus, a lack of supervision by Regional Council is compromising the Yala PA's two primary goals of conservation of wildlife and tourism.

**Figure 6.19 Land pollution in the Kithalalanda dumping site**





**Figure 6.20 Rubbish dumping site in Kithalalanda**



*Note:* Sign says: “WARNING! Dumping garbage in this place is prohibited. The fine is Rs10,000 (USD131). Sort the garbage brought here according to degradable and non-degradable. Then, hand over the sorted garbage bags to the compost site. Thissamaharama Regional Council and Environment Unit of the Police.”

#### **6.2.4 Local community and conservation**

The household survey revealed favourable community attitudes towards PA tourism’s impact on conservation goals in Yala. Of the 156 respondents, 116 believed that PA tourism is having a positive impact on conservation efforts in Yala PA and the surrounding community, while 40 disagreed.

These findings emphasise the importance of enhancing the relationship between the local community and PA to foster wildlife conservation through community participation in Yala. When asked about their awareness of the conservation goals of Yala, the majority of respondents (70%) responded affirmatively, with the remaining 30% indicating lack of awareness. When queried about the specific conservation goals of Yala, respondents mentioned various initiatives by the Yala park management (see Table 6.9).

**Table 6.9 Community awareness of conservation initiatives in the Yala PA**

<b>Conservation Initiatives</b>	<b>%</b>
DWC initiate the rules and regulations for conservation.	41
Park management fines for cutting trees and poaching.	30
Park management conducts regular patrol along the Yala border.	17
Maintaining electric fence.	8
Conducting participatory conservation programme through Yala Wildlife Committees (YWC).	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

*Note:* 127 of the 156 survey respondents gave answers to this question. Each respondent is only allowed to give one response ( $\Rightarrow$  total = 100%).

The survey respondents clearly saw the DWC as a regulatory body, responsible for enforcing rules and park policies. Forty-one per cent of the respondents perceived the DWC to be a functioning legal body conserving PA and wildlife, one-third of the respondents stated that illegal activities such as tree cutting or poaching might lead to fines, and 17% mentioned that the Park management conducts regular patrol along the Yala border. Eight per cent of the respondents feel that maintaining an electric fence and 4% thought that participating in conservation activities through YWC can minimise human–elephant conflicts and support protecting Yala.

According to a schoolteacher in the non-PA tourism group, the park management should adopt an unbiased approach and treat all stakeholders equally, without favouring any particular group:

“It is good that Yala park management has made the restrictions to enter the Yala PA for illegal activities. The law should be the same for everyone and should avoid favouritism. New hotels should not be built near the PA by clearing the forest cover.” (schoolteacher, non-PA tourism group)

The Ranakeliya community exhibited a strong understanding of the conservation challenges encountered by Yala park management. Both the survey respondents and mapping participants possessed practical knowledge to effectively address these issues, along with a keen desire to support and actively engage in conservation initiatives. However, there is



limited community representation in the YWC, so there is a need to establish a mechanism that can inclusively harness the strength and contributions of every community member towards PA conservation efforts.

This comment from an airport cleaner within the PA tourism group highlights the local community's gradual shift towards refraining from causing harm to Yala:

“Cutting trees for logging is minimal at present. DWC fines even for collecting firewood. Only forest conservation initiatives were applied 30 years ago, but wildlife conservation commenced later. Now poaching is limited, and the fine is Rs50,000 (USD665).” (airport cleaner, PA group)

A farmer in the non-PA tourism group commented about some activities conducted by the YWC:

“The local community was made aware of the value of the forest and wildlife parallel to a volunteer cleaning programme in Yala organised through the YWC.” (farmer, non-PA group)

The YWC organised a one-day rubbish cleaning programme inside Yala with the participation of Ranakeliya community members. The mapping exercises participants confirmed that the YWC of Ranakeliya is 100% led by the local women (housewives) and Figure 6.21 shows how the local women actively participated in this cleaning programme.

Two out of every five respondents (40%) mentioned that they could sense the value of Yala for the local PA tourism employees and how it positively affects their livelihoods (see Table 6.10). Twenty-five per cent of the respondents stated that PA tourism did not influence their attitudes towards conservation. Fifteen per cent pointed out that logging, poaching and other unauthorised activities in Yala have decreased due to the laws and legal framework. Twenty per cent mentioned that providing water to the wild animals in Yala during drought is a conservation initiative powered by PA tourism. The community, primarily those who work in the PA tourism sector (40%), understand the direct link between their household economy and Yala conservation.

**Figure 6.21 Cleaning programme in Yala organised by YWC**



**Table 6.10 PA tourism influences the local community to achieve the conservation goals in Yala**

	%
The community understood the value of protecting Yala as a resource to secure jobs for workers in the PA tourism sector	40
Not influential	25
Providing water to the wild animals in Yala during the drought season	20
Cutting trees, poaching and other unauthorised activities in Yala has decreased	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

*Note:* 136 of the 156 survey respondents gave answers to this question. Each respondent is only allowed to give one response (=> total = 100%).

During the household survey, the respondents were asked about their willingness to contribute to the conservation goals of Yala, and none of them expressed an unwillingness to do so. Table 6.11 illustrates the various types of contributions that the community in

Ranakeliya is willing to offer towards conserving the Yala PA. Most of the respondents displayed a willingness to contribute their labour or financial support for conservation activities, such as tree planting and repairing electric fences.

**Table 6.11 The types of contributions the community are willing to offer towards conserving the Yala PA**

	%
Willing to plant trees in Yala	35
Willing to contribute labour	20
Willing to contribute to any conservation programme conducted by the YWO	10
Willing to build or repair the electric fence	9
Wiling to contribute to organising rubbish disposal in a proper way	8
Willing to protest against building hotels inside Yala	6
Willing to make the people aware of the value of Yala	5
Willing to contribute money	5
Willing to strengthen the relationship between the village and the Yala WO	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

*Note:* 134 of the 156 survey respondents gave answers to this question. Each respondent is only allowed to give one response (=> total = 100%).

The biggest group of respondents said they are willing to plant trees in Yala. Twenty per cent of community members would provide their labour, and 5% would give money towards protecting Yala. Nine per cent of the respondents are willing to help build and maintain the electric fence. Ten per cent of respondents indicated they are willing to contribute to any conservation programme conducted by the YWO. These positive responses show how the community is willing to commit in different ways, all of which will strengthen the relationship between park management and the villagers in order to achieve the conservation goals of the Yala PA.

The DWC and the YWO have taken initiatives to educate school children on wildlife conservation through a Buddhist religious school (conducted every Sunday in almost every Buddhist temple across Sri Lanka, referred to as ‘Sunday Schools’) in the Thissamaharama DSD. School textbooks with pictures and information about wild animals in Yala on the cover pages are distributed to the children (Figure 6.22). A notice on the cover of the book (Figure 6.23) states that the DWC invites the local community to support Yala park management to eradicate poaching. One household survey respondent showed me this book to me, as they welcomed this initiative and commented that the children were now improving the conservation behaviour of adults:

“My 12-year-old son received this book a few weeks ago when he went to Sunday School. DWC has been doing this educational programme for a few years now, and it is a good way of educating the young generation and giving them an idea of wildlife in Yala. Unlike when we were young, the new generation is aware of the environmental issues well, and they sometimes advise us [adults] too. My son does not allow us to cut trees, even in my backyard. If such a kid is raised in one’s home, the father of that family cannot go for illegal activities in Yala like poaching because they cannot slip from their own kids’ criticisms.” (survey respondent)

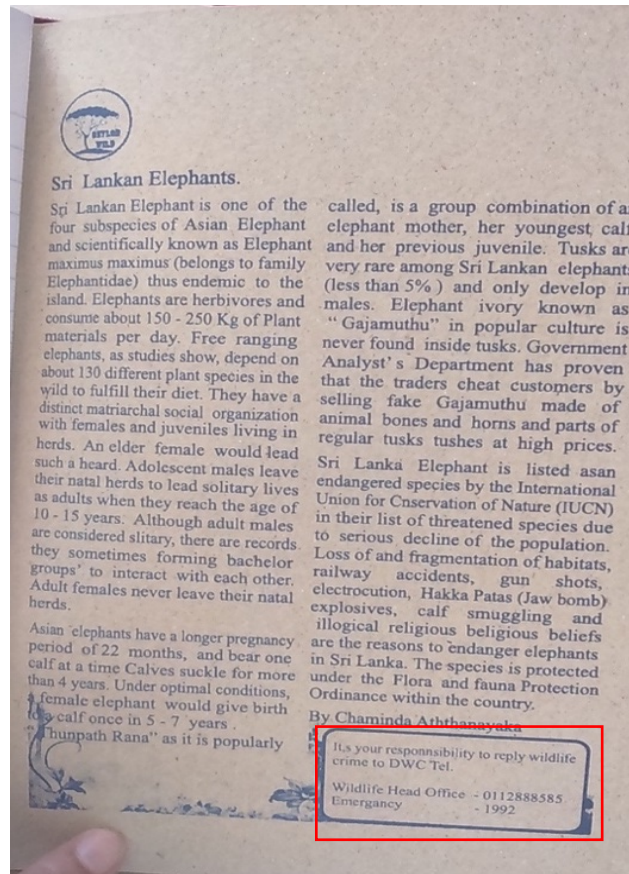
The above statement reflects strong hope for the future of wildlife in Yala, one that lies in the hands of the younger generation.

**Figure 6.22 Textbook donated by the Yala Wildlife Office**



*Note:* “Love the ones who breathe today for the ones who breathe in future. The project designed to develop knowledge about the students’ natural environment through the Buddhist religious schools.”

**Figure 6.23 Back page of the textbook donated by Yala Wildlife Office**



*Note:* "It is your responsibility to reply (sic) wildlife crime to DWC Tel.  
Wildlife head office - 0112888585  
Emergency - 1992"

### **6.3 Conflicts between stakeholders**

Several incidents reflecting conflicts between PA tourism stakeholders in Yala and the local community were highlighted during the data-collection phase. Conflicts occur between outside stakeholders and those in the community who engage in PA tourism, between the private sector (including both outsiders and those in the community who engage in PA tourism) and the local community, and between tourists and the local community. Each of these different types of conflict will be discussed in the following sections.

### 6.3.1 Local community and Yala

This section aims to answer three key questions:

1. How deep are the conflicts between Yala (wildlife and park management) and the local community from the community's point of view?
2. Is there a lack of an emotional bond or psychological connection between the local community and Yala?
3. Is the separation of the local community from their natural capital (Yala) a cause of conflict?

The local community in Ranakeliya had lived with Yala for generations before the conservation initiatives and PA tourism activities began. Before the 1800s, the local community depended on the Yala PA for hunting and gathering but not for economic activities like PA tourism (Wijesinghe, 2003). Yet, the conservation issues were not as evident as they are today because the community and the forest co-existed. Historically, the traditional consumption of forest resources, coupled with a small population and restricted settlements around Yala, did not give rise to contemporary conservation challenges, including human–elephant conflicts and deforestation.

The survey revealed the information to understand the current bond between the local community and Yala park. When asked “What does Yala Protected Area mean to you?” the majority of survey respondents commented that Yala is a precious community resource, one they are proud of and feel responsible for.

“Yala is the heart of the Thissamaharama.”

“Yala is like a gem.”

“Yala is a resource, and it brings pride to us.”

“Yala is the most valuable resource we own as a community, and we are the guardians responsible for protecting it.”

(local community respondents to the household survey)

Ninety-five per cent of 156 of those survey expressed positive feelings towards Yala. One chena farmer highlighted the value of Yala for their hometown, and his comment broadly expresses why the local community see Yala as a resource:



“Yala is like the heart of southern Sri Lanka. The international tourists travel for many days and spend so much money to see the animals here, and therefore, we need to protect the wildlife in Yala.” (chena farmer)

Fewer than a quarter thought of Yala in terms of offering employment opportunities for villagers. A few felt that Yala is a source of forest goods (food and firewood) for needy villagers. Figure 6.24 shows a tractor full of firewood collected from the Yala PA heading to the village. Only 5% of the total respondents (156) who participated in this research highlighted negative aspects of Yala, such as ‘a difficult area to live’, and animals damage ‘the cultivation activities’.

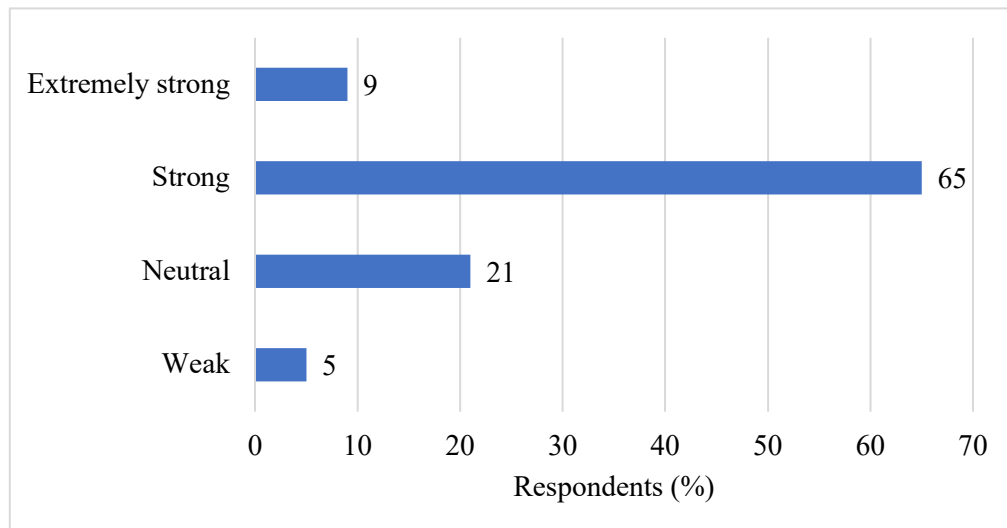
**Figure 6.24 A tractor full of firewood collected from Yala, being transported to the neighbouring village**



Around 75% of those surveyed believed that the bond between Yala PA and the Ranakeliya community is strong or extremely strong (Figure 6.25).



**Figure 6.25 The bond between Yala PA and the Ranakeliya community ( $n = 156$ )**



The respondents attributed their positive feelings towards Yala to the economic benefits that the PA brings, such as new job opportunities and developing of the rural economy in Ranakeliya and aloe vera cultivation (see Figures 6.26 and 6.27). A housewife who is a member of a YWC explained:

“The YWC encouraged me to start the aloe vera plantation. The aim of starting this aloe vera plantation by the Yala Wildlife Office is to impede chena-related deforestation and as a solution to the human–elephant conflicts. Aloe vera is economically profitable and can be cultivated in a small home garden. However, at least 20 perches of home gardens should be eligible to receive funds. This committee has distributed the plants and helped establish a water supply system by aiding 1,000-litre water tanks and water sprinkling equipment.” (housewife and member of the YWC)

Given the high level of community and commercial interest in aloe vera cultivation, it is unlikely that the Ranakeliya YWC will focus their activities and resources on strengthening engagement in PA tourism.

**Figure 6.26 Yala Wildlife Committee activities – distributing aloe vera plants**



*Photo credit: Yala Wildlife Office (2018).*

**Figure 6.27 Yala Wildlife Committee activities – distributing water tanks**



*Photo credit: Yala Wildlife Office (2018).*

When the survey respondents were asked whether they had any personal experience or incident that they could remember regarding tensions occurring between the Ranakeliya community and YWO, 75% said ‘yes’. One female respondent whose husband works as a safari jeep driver recalled her experience related to wildlife accident inside Yala:

“Recently, my husband’s jeep accidentally hit a rabbit while doing a safari in Yala, and the driver of the following jeep has complained to the wildlife office about the dead animal. The Yala Wildlife Office has filed the case in court, and my husband had to pay a fine of USD54 (Rs15,000). Nevertheless, we think proceeding with the law is good as a lesson for other safari jeep drivers to help protect animals.” (wife of a safari jeep driver)

Even though this jeep driver experienced conflict between the YWO and his financial situation (he had to pay a fine), he was not angry with the Yala Wildlife Office, which is a positive sign of the strengthening relationship between YWO and the Ranakeliya community. The jeep drivers should be mindful of adhering to speed limits and being cautious of wildlife crossing the road; this incident serves as an example for other jeep drivers to exercise caution.

From the community perspective, there are two central tensions between Yala PA and the Ranakeliya community: conflict between the local community and wild elephants, and conflict between the local community and park management. Sixty-seven per cent of the survey respondents cited conflict between humans and wild elephants; for example, because wild elephants damage the villagers’ crops. Thirty-three per cent mentioned conflicts that occur between villagers and wildlife officers when the villagers illegally enter the Yala PA; for example, for poaching. (Table 6.12).

**Table 6.12 Tensions occurring between Yala and Ranakeliya community**

	%
Conflicts between humans and elephants	67
Conflicts between villagers and Yala wildlife officers	33
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

*Note:* 127 of the 156 survey respondents gave answers to this question. Each respondent is only allowed to give one response (=> total = 100%).

## Human–elephant conflict

A chena farmer's wife gave examples of and reasons behind human–elephant conflicts that she had experienced:

“In the past, the elephants lived in the area where the campsites are today. These campsites are protected by private electric fences built by their owners. They are rich outsiders who mainly came from Colombo. When the elephants lost their habitat, they started roaming in villages. Another reason for intensifying the human–elephant conflict is building 25 new villages on the border of Yala. One time, a wild elephant chased my husband. Another time, the chena farmers collectively drove out the elephants when the wildlife officers were inactive when the farmers complained about wild elephants. However, the villagers always cannot drive out the elephants as they have to engage with their livelihoods. Our only request from the wildlife officers is to move some aggressive elephants to a faraway place.” (chena farmer's wife)

Figure 6.28 is an image of a wild elephant near an electric fence. The image is relevant because I had observed a wild elephant intruding on a home garden the night before I took this photo. A local housewife was alone at home with her children that night, and I assisted her in driving out the elephant. The elephant had eaten the sprouts of young coconut trees, which has rendered the trees useless as they never grow again once the central growing sprout has been damaged. The housewife said:

“Last night, we could not sleep as we heard an elephant eating the coconut sprouts. Wild elephants visit to our home gardens are not a surprise, and our community get used to wild elephants like domestic animals such as dogs or cows, but the risk is embedded. Wild elephants always destroy our plants and crops.” (housewife)



**Figure 6.28 A wild elephant near the electric fence, Yala**



Crops destroyed by a wild elephant are an unbearable loss for a poor farming family, and human lives are vulnerable when the villagers try to drive away the elephants. According to this housewife, the wildlife officers do not often respond when the community complain about the presence of wild elephants in their gardens. The YWO occasionally gives the villagers firecrackers to scare the elephants away. However, firecrackers are not a permanent solution to this problem. Tensions arise between the local community and Yala park management when wildlife officers fail to respond promptly to a situation when there is conflict between the local villagers and wild elephants.

The community survey uncovered personal opinions and concerns about human–elephant conflicts, and the community mapping exercises gave deeper insights into this issue. All the groups that participated in the mapping exercises mentioned a historical incident about a human–elephant conflict in 1995. This retired teacher recounted his version of the story when local villagers were threatened by wild elephants:

“Two decades ago, a young man who cultivated a chena was killed by a wild elephant that came at night. Villagers were angry with wildlife officers. The villagers believed the elephants arrived in villages as the

wildlife officers were irresponsible in their duty and did not take any action to protect the villages. The poachers who always made conflicts with the Yala Wildlife Office also supported forming a gang of villagers and attacking the Palatupana Wildlife Office.” (retired teacher)

The conflict worsened as the response of the YWO failed to calm the aggressive villagers.

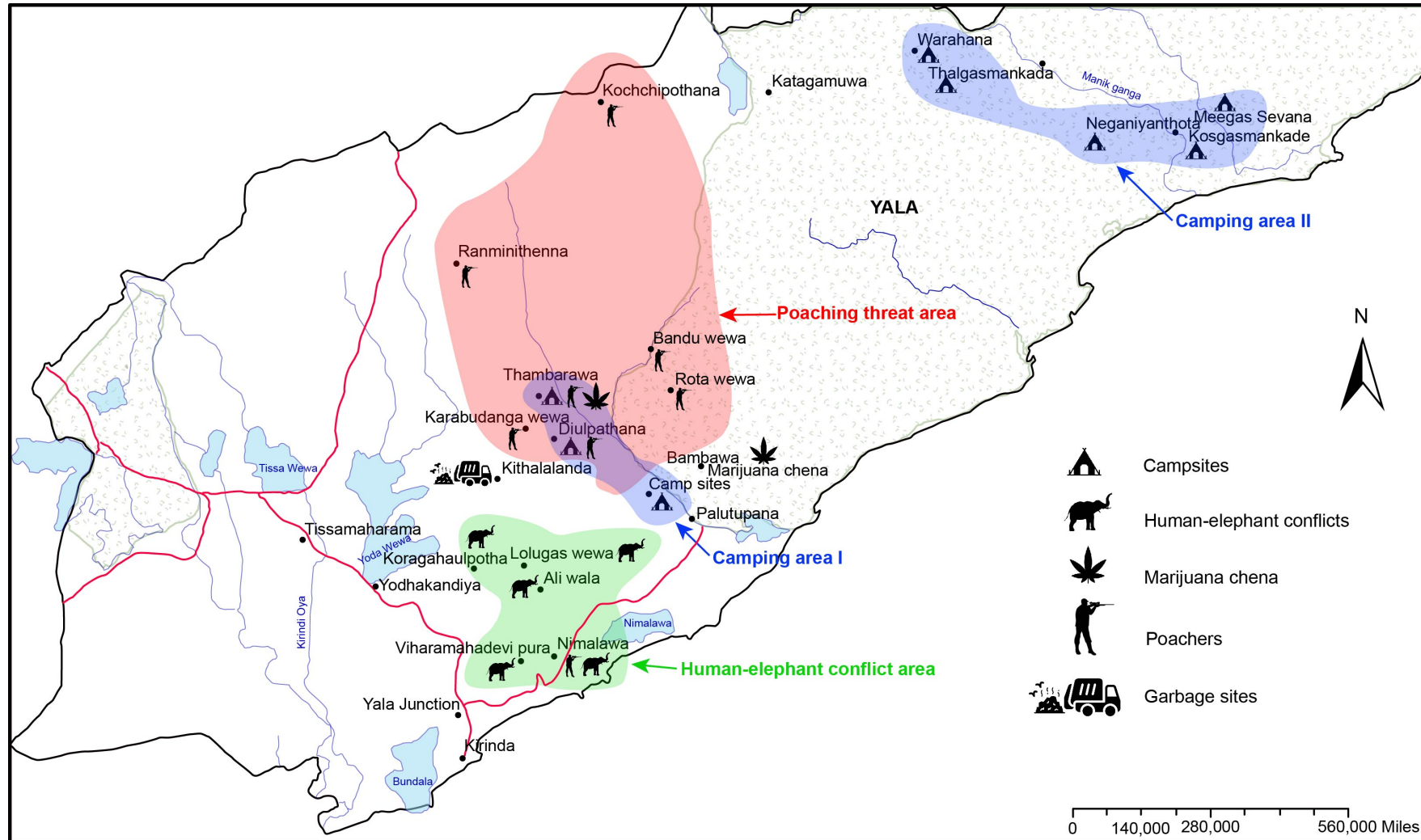
The retired teacher continued:

“First, the officers threatened the villagers. As the villagers did not listen, the officers fired a shot. As a result, another young village man died, and many were injured. Most of the villagers who joined this attack hid during the police inspection. Some innocent villagers were arrested for one year while their families suffered. That was the main conflict between Yala and the local community, and it took a long time to heal the horrific memory in the villagers’ minds.”

The villagers’ impulsive reaction against the YWO, lacking foresight, resulted in prolonged suffering for both those involved in the attack and innocent individuals, particularly of the families of the two young men who had died. This incident developed a distrust and disconnected the local community from wildlife management in Yala for an extended period.

During the mapping exercises, participants were asked to mark locations where human–elephant conflicts have occurred within the Thissamaharama DSD (see Figure 6.29). The participants identified Koragahaulpotha and Nimalawa as the most problematic places where human deaths have been recorded, while Lolugas wewa, Ali wala and Viharamahadevipura are also frequently affected sites. By overlaying the mapping data, I could see that the areas where human–elephant conflicts occur are also sites of water tanks. This spatial analysis revealed that the area of the human–elephant conflict lies between three water tanks: Yodhawewa, Nimalawa and Bundala. The reason why elephants roam around this area could be to access the tanks, but the participants were unaware of the actual cause.

Figure 6.29 The locations of human–elephant conflict in Yala



According to YWO records, there have been three reported human deaths and 15 elephant deaths between 2016 and 2019 due to human–elephant conflict. In 2019 alone, there were 14 reported incidents of conflicts between elephants and the community (Yala National Park, 2022). Notably, Sri Lanka reported the highest number of human deaths ( $n = 201$ ) and elephant deaths ( $n = 405$ ) in 2019, indicating more than one elephant death per day (Wijesinghe, 2003).

Table 6.12 shows the reasons for human–elephant conflict, according to the household survey respondents. Most of the respondents (63%) said that human–elephant conflicts mainly occur when elephants roam around the villages and disturb the locals’ lives. Twenty-four respondents identified that conflicts occur when elephants come to eat the villagers’ chena crops. Seven per cent stated that land encroachment for settlements had caused the conflicts, while 6% suggested that the broken or malfunctioning electric fence leads to conflicts.

**Table 6.13 Reasons behind the human–elephant conflicts**

Reasons	%
Elephants enter the village, harming people, damaging the cultivation and properties	63
Chena cultivation	24
Houses are located on land that belongs to the PA	7
The electric fence is not functioning properly	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

*Note:* 143 of the 156 survey respondents gave answers to this question. Each respondent is only allowed to give one response ( $\Rightarrow$  total = 100%).

One housewife said the wildlife conflict is a result of humans’ irresponsible behaviour when they expand their settlements into the elephants’ habitat:

“Elephants are not wrong for coming to villages, but humans are at fault because they expand their settlements into the elephants’ habitat. The elephant is a giant animal; a single elephant needs a big forest lot to eat. Once they run out of food in the forest, they come to villages.”  
(housewife)

It is clear from this comment and the reasons given in Table 6.13 that the local community can clearly define the problems and causes of the human–elephant conflicts in their area.



Once a problem is clearly defined, it is then easier to find a solution. Solutions suggested by the survey respondents are given in Table 6.14.

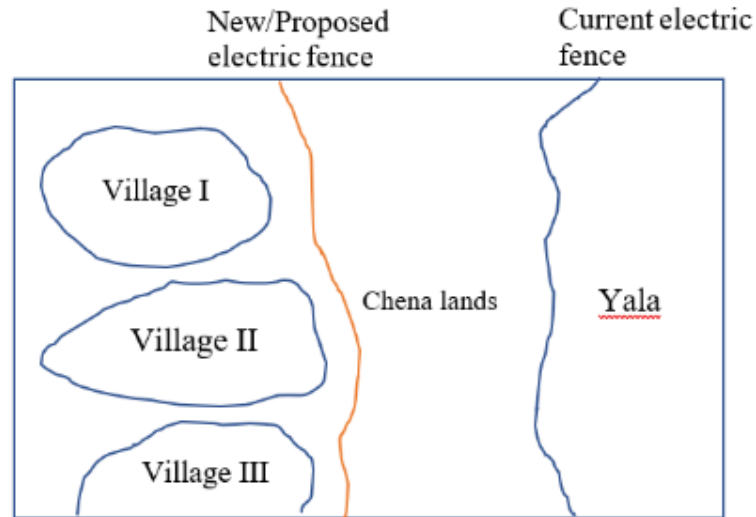
**Table 6.14 Solutions suggested for human–elephant conflict**

<b>Solutions</b>	<b>%</b>
The current electric fence needs to be repaired.	62
Villagers should be made aware of the value of te Yala PA and wildlife.	27
The wild elephants who visit villages should be translocated to other PA.	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

*Note:* 133 of the 156 survey respondents gave answers to this question. Each respondent is only allowed to give one response (=> total = 100%).

Even though most of the respondents suggested repairing the current electric fence, the proposed solution is controversial with park management and so no decision has been made. The existing fence is located along the boundary of the Yala PA (Figure 6.30). The chena lands are located just next to the current fence and then the village settlements lie beyond the cultivated area. The wild elephants cross the electric fence to eat the chena crops and then roam into the villages. The local farmers engage in chena cultivation for only three months per year. The Yala park management has suggested constructing a new electric fence along the villages' edge, and then allow the elephants to eat the abandoned chena after the main crops have been harvested. The Yala park management believes that the elephants will not come to villages if they can find food from the chena areas.

**Figure 6.30 A sketch of the electric fence placement in Yala**



A woman who is the president of the YWC explained the community's viewpoint:

“When the wildlife officers approached me to gather villagers to establish the Wildlife Committee, I stated my conditions clearly that I would not support obtaining the villagers' permission to establish a new elephant fence through this Wildlife Committee. If the new fence is placed between Yala and villages, there are farmers in Koragahaulpotha willing to commit suicide by poisoning their families because their village will be trapped between Yala and the new fence. Then they would struggle with wild elephants for the rest of their life, but they also reject the idea of resettlement.” (president of the YWC)

In addition to opposition from the Koragahaulpotha village, local farmers in neighbouring villages are also against the new fencing proposal. They fear losing ownership of their chena lands if the new fence is placed along the village boundary. As most of the community is against the new fencing idea, a permanent solution for the human–elephant conflict has not been reached.

A participant of the mapping exercises, who works as a development officer, highlighted another weakness in the proposal to construct a new electric fence between the Yala PA and the neighbouring villages:

“There are technical issues with the electric fence, which is inactive. It is broken from some places by wild elephants, and the length does not cover the whole boundary of villages. The electric fence could be extended and maintained once repaired as an immediate solution. The electric fence is a failed method in terms of villagers' experience because elephants can easily break it by putting in logs. Slider-bank systems can be introduced and constructed around the margin of parks which works as a barrier between the park and the human settlements.

Researchers recommend this system as a permanent method that is low cost and needs low maintenance. However, this new method is not supported or tested by the Yala Wildlife Office soon.” (development officer)

The current (old) electric fence is inactive, and does not provide enough coverage for all the villages near the Yala PA boundary. The length is measured and location been marked for the new electric fence, but its construction has not gone ahead due to the locals’ objection.

## **Poaching**

The second-largest conflict between YWO and the community is poaching. However, conflict between wildlife management and poachers is not only limited to Yala when considering researchers’ experiences in other Sri Lankan parks and developing countries (Köpke et al., 2021; Rathnayake, 2021; Tsoriyo et al., 2021). The mapping participants stated that money received from selling wild meat is the primary motivation for doing this illegal activity, rather than poaching merely for domestic consumption. The participants also recalled several conflicts between Yala wildlife officers and the local community related to poaching. All the groups participating in the mapping exercises remembered a historical incident related to poaching that caused conflict. A farmer recalled the incident:

“A decade ago, the wildlife officers and rangers in Yala raided a well-known poacher who was offended for several poaching activities while hiding in a clay hut. The poacher was equipped with sharp knives for an attack come from the Yala Wildlife Office. The poacher injured everyone when the officers and rangers entered his dark clay hut through a narrow door. One assistant park manager died, and the poacher was arrested later.” (farmer)

The YWO records the number of deaths that occur during conflicts with poachers. Since 1957, six members of the YWO and three poachers have died. Fifteen conflicts were recorded between poachers and Yala wildlife rangers in 2019. Even though the COVID-19 pandemic with its resultant significant decline in visitor numbers for more than a year created greater freedom for wildlife in Yala, the DWC has increased the number of patrols as the incidence of poaching has risen because of job losses as the PA tourism sector shrank due to the pandemic (Rodrigo, 2020a).

The mapping exercises participants indicated where poaching is most common, such as near Diulpathana, Thambarawa, Karabudanga wewa, Nimalawa, Bandu wewa and Rota

wewa (see Figure 6.29). Velipothewala is not a place where poaching occurs but is where the police found and caught people with wild meat. Some places the participants marked where poaching occurs are not within the Yala PA but in some scrublands outside the Yala boundary where wild animals roam, such as Kochchipathana and Ranminithenna. Even though these locations are outside the Yala PA, poaching or selling wild meat is still illegal (Sethi et al., 2019). A young man who works in PA tourism confirmed that:

“There are plenty of points between Rota wewa and Kataragama where the poachers access the forest. These activities are impossible to stop.”  
(tourism worker)

However, a housewife from the non-PA tourism group provided a different perspective on poaching:

“In my childhood, when a villager killed a wild animal, the meat was distributed among all the houses in the village and the leftovers dried up to use later, but I have not eaten any wild meat for the last 30 years. Occasionally, a few people poach to make some money. However, the young generation absorbed from neighbouring communities in the Yala Wildlife Office is now dedicated to protecting the wildlife.”  
(housewife, non-PA tourism group)

Employing community members for PA conservation is a progressive step in Yala, Sri Lanka (Newsome, 2013).

## **Marijuana**

The mapping exercises participants marked two locations they know are related to illegal drugs like marijuana: Thambarawa and Marijuana chena. (This second location has no formal place name, so I named it informally.) As the participants marked only two locations related to illegal drugs, compared with the five locations marked for poaching and the five marked as locations of human–elephant conflict, it appears illegal drugs are a minor-scale problem compared with the other two conflicts between the local community and Yala park management. A housewife from the non-PA tourism group remembered an incident that occurred in the past 12 years:

“When the wildlife rangers found a marijuana chena, some have fired shots and followed to catch the planters. Somehow, a higher-ranked wildlife officer was accidentally shot and killed by a wildlife ranger during this mission. As the shooter was a casual worker, the DWC did not support releasing him from the legal offence. The shooter was locked up for several years.” (housewife, non-PA tourism group)

A farmer in the non-PA tourism group commented that PA tourism has stimulated illegal drug production and selling in the area:

“Tourism industry development has increased the cultivation of marijuana and selling among the young generation. Four years ago, the police discovered land prepared for cultivating marijuana inside Yala, and around two acres had been cleared. How did it come without support from inside Yala [Wildlife Office]?” (farmer, non-PA tourism group)

Another housewife in the non-PA tourism group recounted her recent experience during the volunteer cleaning programme in Yala:

“When the YWC has gone to Yala for a cleaning programme, a village woman found a small polythene packet of marijuana under a tree. The seller could have left the packet for the buyer to collect, the latest method of exchanging illegal drugs without face-to-face interaction. The seller keeps the product under a particular tree and takes a photo, and then the photo sends to the buyer to inform the location to collect. A few jeep drivers are doing this to earn extra money.” (housewife, non-PA tourism group)

The police do not usually conduct inspections for illegal drugs within the Yala PA, perhaps because they do not want to compromise the growing PA-tourism industry. As revealed by the locals, this freedom from police monitoring inside the park is misused by a few jeep drivers, who exchange drugs within the park boundaries. This relationship between PA tourism and cannabis is not recorded in current literature in other contexts.

### **6.3.2 Local community and other PA tourism stakeholders**

There are some issues raised between the local community and other PA tourism stakeholders: outsiders, the private sector and tourists.

#### **Outsiders**

Conflicts of interest over sharing the benefits of PA tourism is particularly pertinent between locals and outsiders. The local community members who participated in the mapping exercises marked nine places of conflict between the local community and outsider stakeholders, of which eight are campsites (see camping areas I and II in Figure 6.29). A few of the campsites belong to locals, but the camping providers are mainly non-locals or outsiders, leading to conflicts of interest. The three campsites Kosgasmankada, Negeniyantota and Meegassewana (in camping area II, located inside the Yala PA) are owned by the Yala park management. Camping service providers can hire these three campsites for their guests. A jeep driver in the PA tourism group recalled how conflict arose between community and outsider camping providers when the outsiders try to hire these campsites permanently:

“In 2014, three luxurious camping service providers hired these campsites in Yala. Then they booked the campsites continuously whether or not they had guests. They did not let any local camping service providers book these campsites. These outsiders did this as setting up the camps from time to time is laborious. They misuse our resources as they can spend a large sum of money by holding the camping sites this way. Then the locals gathered for picketing until the outsiders left the place. The day they left, the locals celebrated. Now, these outsiders have their lands outside Yala, and the locals are not against it as it is their private property.” (tourism worker)

### **Private-sector tourism service providers of PA tourism**

Conflicts between the private-sector (including both locals and outsiders) tourism service providers of PA tourism and the local community were generally seen as limited. Both groups who participated in the mapping exercises marked only four locations of conflict between private-sector providers and the local community. Three of these conflicts arose when the local community objected to forest being cleared to build hotels, in Yala, Yodha wewa and Nimalawa. Another incident happened when a hotel released its drainage into the local paddy fields. The hotel owners understood the hotel could not exist when the community resisted it, so they collaborated with the locals to reach a mutually acceptable agreement. A farmer in the non-PA tourism group revealed power imbalances between locals and outsiders:

“Most of the time, when a hotel is supposed to build, the villagers are against it as a habit by thinking it may disturb villagers’ lives and the environment. However, the locals’ voice is powerless as hotel owners have direct contact with those in higher positions.” (farmer)

The locals protest against tourism-related construction in Yala PA if they learn the buildings are harmful to the environment. Their concern for the environment is a positive sign for PA conservation in Yala; however, the locals’ efforts are inefficient without a scientific basis or institutional support.

### **Tourists**

The mapping exercises participants reported six incidents between tourists and locals; for example, minor robberies such as a camera (in Kochchipathana) and a helmet (at Sewapiyasa). Some were incidents the participants had heard about, while others were incidents the participants had personally experienced or witnessed. For example, a retired schoolteacher in the non-PA tourism group recalled:

“One day, when I was watching the road from a distance, I saw a tourist came by bicycle had stolen a helmet from a motorbike parked near the road which belonged to a local. The tourist ran away very fast after stealing the helmet.” (retired schoolteacher, non-PA tourism group)

According to the mapping exercise participants, both stakeholder groups – tourists and locals – are experiencing small material losses, but these losses are not generally highlighted as a controversial issue in Yala. However, a safari jeep driver of the PA tourism group was of the opinion that any potential conflict and harm between tourists and locals never eventuates because there is very limited contact between the two groups:

“Mostly there is no chance when any conflict between tourists and community can happen as the tourists directly go to Yala and then move to their next destination without mixing and mingling with locals.” (tourism worker)

The limited interaction between tourists and the local community reduces the likelihood of conflicts occurring. However, while this may mitigate potential conflicts, it also limits opportunities for meaningful cultural exchange and community involvement in tourism activities.

## **6.4 Chapter summary**

This chapter has discussed the impacts of Yala PA tourism on the local community from the Ranakeliya community’s point of view. In particular, the discussion has paid attention to the economic, sociocultural and environmental dimensions of potential impacts.

Community households with family members involved, either directly or indirectly, in PA tourism-related jobs perceived clear and tangible positive economic impacts from Yala PA tourism. Other community members who participated in the household survey also acknowledged that PA tourism contributes to economic growth in Ranakeliya. For example, Yala PA tourism has created opportunities for the community women in Ranakeliya to become employees or entrepreneurs.

The negative sociocultural impacts of PA tourism on the Ranakeliya community are limited, although a few household participants cited drug addiction and cultural erosion, as youth try to copy foreign styles and fashion. There is, however, enormous potential to expand the positive sociocultural impacts of PA tourism with the support of private-sector stakeholders, by connecting the lives and culture of the local community into the PA tourism experience.

Negative environmental impacts on the local community and their surroundings are apparent due to the rapid growth of the Yala PA tourism sector. Even though the community is affected by the negative environmental impacts, such as solid waste-related pollution and water scarcity, they are still willing to support Yala park management's conservation initiatives, this willingness bodes well for advancing future participatory conservation initiatives. The following chapter explores the way Yala PA tourism could be managed for sustainable community development while still achieving conservation goals in the park.



## Chapter 7: MANAGING PA TOURISM FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

*“PA tourism is protected when Yala is protected. Our livelihood is protected when PA tourism is protected. Therefore, our lives are safe, if only the Yala is safe.”*

(A Yala safari jeep driver in Ranakeliya, 2019)

The case study of Yala gave me an opportunity to gain deep insights into the multi-faceted and complex issues associated with the sustainable development of PA tourism in a real-life setting. In this chapter, the findings from the case study are summarised and interpreted to explore implications for the sustainable management of PA tourism in Yala. The key findings are evaluated and synthesised with existing literature to formulate potential solutions to the issues that are currently challenging for sustainable Yala PA tourism. The Community Capital Framework (CCF), stakeholder theory and political ecology are employed as theoretical lenses to shed light on the nexus between PA tourism, community development and conservation. The following discussion provides a thorough and expansive context for understanding how PA tourism can be managed to support community development and, in turn, increase the Ranakeliya community's desire to embrace conservation activities in Yala.

The chapter presents seven narratives extracted from the case study of Yala PA tourism and its impacts on the local community of Ranakeliya. These stories portray the inherent weaknesses and impediments pertaining to Yala PA tourism, as well as the strengths of Yala PA tourism and future prospects to foster sustainable community development and conservation. Section 7.1 explores the impediments to managing sustainable PA tourism in Yala. In particular, it explores the problems that arise out of political interference, the inequitable distribution of the benefits and negative impacts of PA tourism resulting in some stakeholders being 'winners' and others being 'losers' from tourism development in Yala, and the problems that arise from ongoing human–elephant conflict, especially in the neighbouring villages. Section 7.2 uses a strength-based approach to explore inclusive community development through PA tourism. The subsections ‘Business makers’ and ‘Women warriors’ explore the strengths that can be found in the local community, while the subsections ‘Cherishing local culture’ and ‘Young stewards of nature’ explore the

possibilities for more sustainable forms of tourism in protected areas, using the case study of Yala.

### **7.1 Impediments to managing sustainable PA tourism in Yala**

Sustainable management of PA tourism in Yala faces significant challenges that impede its effectiveness in promoting conservation and benefiting local communities. Two crucial issues that affect the future of PA tourism management in Yala are political interference and the equitable sharing of the benefits – and costs – of PA tourism. The allocation and distribution of economic benefits generated from PA tourism activities often becomes entangled in political agendas, resulting in inequalities and mismanagement (Mostafanezhad et al., 2016; Sarasin, 2013).

Several impediments inherent in the management of PA tourism in Yala hinder the ability of PA tourism to effectively contribute to community development in the long run. One of the key weaknesses can be encapsulated in the notion of ‘winners and losers’. In this research, the ‘winners’ refer to those who gain an advantage or a benefit, while the ‘losers’ experience setbacks or disadvantages from Yala PA tourism. In this case, the elites (outsiders) tend to be the *winners*. In contrast, local communities (insiders) are often the *losers*, missing opportunities to access resources and benefits. Locals do have access to specific opportunities such as employment; however, opportunities to derive benefits from PA tourism are limited and there is room for improvement in some areas, such as prioritising members of the local community to fill a variety of job roles and become employed in the sector and opening some avenues for local community members to gain some new skills and training to fit the variety of job roles. Local communities are more willing to support PA tourism development if they have more opportunities to reap sufficient benefits, which also encourages them to participate effectively in conservation actions in PAs (Sarr et al., 2021). Tackling these impediments is crucial for generating sustainable community development and embracing conservation through PA tourism in Yala.

Costs of PA tourism for local communities also arise when there are significant disturbances to wildlife in their natural habitats. Human–wildlife conflicts are often manifestations of underlying poor management of the natural environment, especially of the feeding and breeding grounds of the wildlife. In Yala, as human activities have encroached upon natural habitats, conflicts have arisen between humans and wild elephants, leading to resource competition and potential harm to both parties. Addressing

these challenges are crucial to ensuring the long-term viability of PA tourism in Yala and fostering a harmonious coexistence between humans and wildlife, including elephants.

### **7.1.1 Political interference**

Power dynamics between stakeholders play a crucial role in shaping PA tourism and affect various stakeholder groups in Yala. This research has identified power-related issues such as community and park management perceptions of political interference and, in some instances, corruption as one of the greatest impediments to achieving sustainable community development through well-managed PA tourism in Yala. The animosity between opposing political parties has negatively affected the ability of the local community to optimise opportunities and reap the benefits associated with PA tourism. As power has changed hands, incoming parties have sometimes withdrawn funding to initiatives enacted by the previous government. Locals believe this is done so that accolades for achieving a particular project's goals do not go to the previous government (i.e, the opposition party). One example is where the political party in power overturned an initiative of the previous government and stopped funding the 'beyond the curd pot' project. This initiative was designed to develop local skills and build on traditional handicrafts for sale to tourists as souvenirs. Local people were trained to produce clay products, which were in high demand from international tourists, thus strengthening the flow of PA tourism benefits to the local community. Traditional handicrafts and souvenirs are integral to the visitor experience (Bernardo & Kastenholz, 2022). They showcase local traditions and skills, serve as a memory of 'place' for visitors, and embed cultural elements into the Yala PA visitor experience. Production of souvenirs by local artisans and craftsmen can also help a community to retain important cultural knowledge and traditional skills that have been handed down through generations through arts, handicrafts, culture, and traditions (Daskon, 2010). Traditional craftsmanship has been identified by UNESCO as one of the five broad domains of intangible cultural heritage (Scovazzi, 2015). The decision by the incoming government to stop funding this project hampered opportunities for local villagers in terms of creating new businesses and job opportunities that strengthen access to sustainable incomes – an important tool to alleviate poverty.

Another example is the deactivation by the incoming party of a compost plant that the previous government had initiated. Establishing a compost plant was a vital step to improving local hotels' waste management and encouraging environmentally friendly

waste management practices. Currently, such initiatives are sorely lacking in Yala PA tourism. The Kithalalanda rubbish dumping site has resulted in environmental pollution and elephants frequently roam into and consume rubbish at the site, which is not good for their health. Thus, through political interference, the local council missed the opportunity of more sustainably managing food and other organic waste. Furthermore, the compost could have been sold to the agricultural sector, which is widely spread in the Thissamaharama area, and so the council missed out on some potential income.

The case study has also generated examples of how political interference at the park-management level affects decisions and policies for Yala PA tourism. For example, the YWO had to halt the safari jeep registration programme after politicians intervened and attempts to disconnect of the telecommunication tower inside the park at busy times, to prevent jeep drivers converging on the leopards, were likewise blocked. Thus, initiatives by the YWO to better manage the park and protect the wildlife within it have been thwarted by directives from politicians. Local community members believe these directives are attempts by politicians to show they are supporting community employees, in order to influence voter decisions in elections.

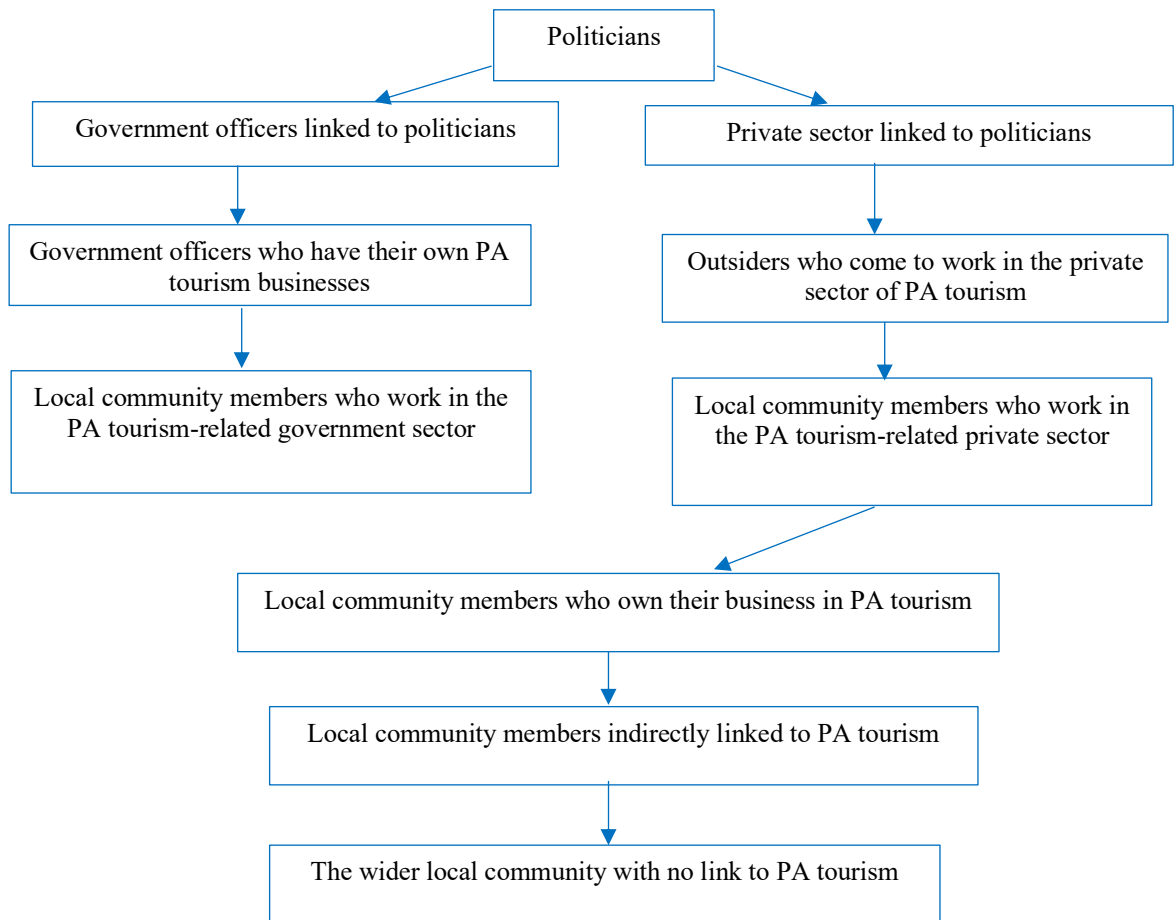
Political interference in park management is extensive, and there was a belief among some of the research participants that political interference has also led to political corruption. Participants cited, for example, gem mining in the Menik River for the personal benefit of politicians. The research findings also relate to community perceptions that politicians support unlawful activities by elite outsiders to gain benefits through PA tourism. For example, the research participants allege that outsiders have used illegal deeds to obtain local lands, and the illegal building of hotels or campsites in tank reservations and inside Yala has been permitted.

Political interference causes unequal opportunities for local residents and businesses to derive economic benefits through PA tourism, causing socioeconomic disparities – a social justice issue for community development. Examples of political ‘meddling’ in the management of the park include the Yala canteen tender going to the politician’s supporters in his hometown, government officials ignoring bids by local providers, and local community members needing the regional politician’s recommendation to become a local wildlife tracker in Yala. Such examples provide strong evidence of the extent of political favouring of a particular group (or groups) in the community.

The research identified the types of power different stakeholders in Yala PA tourism exert over other stakeholders. For example, the policymaker stakeholder group holds coercive power to create and implement policies for environmental protection and to enforce regulations for Yala PA tourism (Saito & Ruhanen, 2017). Meanwhile, Yala park management has legitimate power through its legal authority to manage the PA and the wildlife within it. Example of legitimate power is the YWO's authority to fine jeep drivers who exceed the speed limit, and the administrative work of the YWO around Yala PA tourism. The tourism service providers (in the private sector) can claim induced power due to their financial capacity to regulate the other stakeholders (e.g., community employees) to some extent by employment, investment, and by offering incentives or rewards. However, there is a lack of competent power in the stakeholder groups interested in conserving the biodiversity and cultural heritage of Yala. One solution is to bring in an external party (research institute or consultancy) that has the knowledge and expertise to guide the sustainable development of PA tourism in Yala (Saito & Ruhanen, 2017).

Stakeholders with more power are likely to gain more benefits, and all the stakeholders (including the government officials, private sector, and community representatives) interviewed for this research commented that, in their opinion, it is the politicians who most benefit from PA tourism in Yala. Next in line are higher-ranking officers in the park management and policymakers, as well as the top-level tourism service providers in the private sector, who gain advantages through political backing. Figure 7.1 is a visual representation of key themes to emerge from the stakeholder interviews, to answer the question: “Who benefits the most from PA tourism?” The figure highlights how the wider local community with no link to Yala PA tourism is perceived to be at the bottom of the hierarchy in terms of receiving benefits from the sector.

**Figure 7.1 “Who benefits the most from PA tourism in Yala?”**



Previous studies have demonstrated that in many developing countries, PA tourism often prioritises outside stakeholders (e.g., international tourists and large tourism operators), leaving the local community with limited benefits and participation (Buzinde et al., 2014; Koot, 2019; Sarrasin, 2013). This lack of inclusivity represents socioeconomic inequalities and marginalises the local community who are deeply connected to the PA destination (Chaminda, 2016; Holroyd, 2016). In order to promote sustainable community development, it is crucial to prioritise community involvement and benefit sharing in PA tourism initiatives for achieving community development while preserving natural and cultural resources.

Issues with stakeholder relationships discovered in this research emphasise the gap between theory and reality. Most stakeholders, including local residents and local employees in Yala PA tourism, gain personal benefits through PA tourism, depending on the power (influence) they exert over others. However, those lacking political support lie at the bottom of the PA tourism benefits hierarchy. In the Yala case study, power is decisive in community development as it determines who can shape decisions to access

resources and benefits. When power is misused, the community is less likely to trust those in political and park management positions, which can create resentment towards and reduce support for PA tourism from locals (Mutanga et al., 2017). This has the potential to create issues with reciprocity regarding local community members participating in conservation and tourism activities. Trust and reciprocity are important aspects of social capital to nurture strong interpersonal relationships within a community (Nunkoo, 2017). The negative socioeconomic influence of power inhibits entrepreneurship and opportunities for local people to enhance their livelihoods, which hinders the overall progress and well-being of the community.

According to Nunkoo and Gursoy (2015), trust is the most crucial factor in a well-functioning relationship. Trust between Yala park management and the local community in Ranakeliya has improved slightly since the establishment of the Yala Wildlife Committee (YWC) in Ranakeliya. However, uncertainties between these two dominant stakeholders still exist due to the inability of the park management to manage ongoing human–elephant conflicts and illegal activities in Yala, such as poaching and logging. These uncertainties are not limited to Yala but can be found in several other PA contexts in developing countries (Buzinde et al., 2014; Mutanga et al., 2017).

Regardless of the type of relationships between stakeholder groups (e.g., financial, products and services, or information), relationships become weak if trust is broken. For example, the relationship between Yala park management and the transport service providers (jeep drivers) is only fragile, reflecting limited trust and understanding between the two groups. Even if the park management has the legitimacy/institutional power to force jeep drivers to obey the park's rules, this research supports other studies' findings that trustworthy relationships can bring better results than rules and regulations do (Manwa, 2003; Wall & Mathieson, 2006).

The political ecology at Yala and the stakeholders' power relationship confirm and extend what is presently known about Yala. As Hettiarachchi (n.d.) contends, "Yala is a mess due to political meddling" in terms of the managerial aspect of the park. The current study's findings advance the knowledge of the political ecology of benefit sharing in PA tourism by adding the community dimension of power circulation among the PA tourism stakeholders and by examining how political interference has created a disadvantageous situation for the local community in terms of accessing the benefits and minimising the costs of PA tourism.

Political interference and corruption are common in PA tourism in developing countries (Buzinde et al., 2014; Hannam, 2005; Koot & Hitchcock, 2019), and the current study's findings, presented in this thesis, broadly support those of previous studies. The park management cannot impose regulations for minor offences by a local community member when the park management has to obey potentially corrupt politicians (Paudel, 2016; Sinha et al., 2012).

The findings from this case study of the Yala PA and its neighbouring community agree that the traditional conservation approach of 'fine and fence' to protect a PA is unsuccessful (Adams & Hulme, 2001; Hanna et al., 2007). The findings further support the idea that community stakeholders are more interactive and more likely to engage with conservation initiatives when they have a more trustworthy relationship with park management (Nunkoo, 2017). This study reconfirms that a collaborative and participatory approach (e.g., through the YWC) can build a harmonious relationship between stakeholders to achieve sustainable community development and conservation goals in PA tourism (Mutanga et al., 2015). In line with studies by other scholars (Bello et al., 2017; Jamal & Stronza, 2009), this research also emphasises the importance of equal or sufficient power distribution among all the stakeholders through collaborative participation in PA tourism management.

### **7.1.2 Winners and losers**

'Winners and losers' is the story of the factors that contribute to the creation of two distinct groups and the impact of these two groups on the sustainability of Yala PA tourism. Firstly, the *winners* are those wealthy outsiders who consistently receive backing from politicians and government institutions to develop PA tourism businesses. This privileged treatment enables them to succeed and expand their businesses, giving them an unfair advantage over the local community, who as a result of this disadvantage, are the *losers*. Secondly, these outsiders (the winners) are granted better access to natural resources than the local community have, thus worsening the disparities between the two groups. This unfair access to resources impedes the ability of local people (losers) to benefit from the natural resources that traditionally were used by the local community. Lastly, the outsiders' presence in PA tourism has resulted in the exploitation of financial benefits that would otherwise advantage the locals, such as employment. The outsiders' domination leaves the local community marginalised and deprived of economic benefits



and opportunities. These inequities ultimately cause a significant risk to the long-term viability of Yala PA tourism.

This study provides empirical evidence of winners and losers: that government institutions prioritise support for large-scale business owners from outside the region while ignoring the needs of local small-scale enterprises. These local entrepreneurs have expressed dissatisfaction, alleging that these external elites are involved in bribery with government officials to, for example, accelerate their registrations of building permits. This evidence supports earlier research conducted on PA tourism within numerous developing countries, which highlights governments' inclination to favour wealthy outsiders over the local community (Akama & Kieti, 2007; Buzinde et al., 2014; Mutanga et al., 2017).

The stakeholder relationship analysis of this case study has identified a noticeable disconnect between other PA tourism stakeholders and the local community; for example, links based on the flow of information (see Figure 5.10). Bello et al. (2017) study on the constraints of community participation in PA tourism in Malawi provides an example of a local community that lacks tourism information compared with other stakeholders. The current research argues that locals' lack of awareness about opportunities in PA tourism means their potential participation in PA tourism is reduced. Only a few community members – those who are more educated and/or wealthier than most – dominate PA tourism in Yala. For example, the local accommodation owners in Ranakeliya are those who have the money, education, and confidence to invest in PA tourism.

Another example of 'winners and losers' cited by a participant in the research was the attempt by external camping providers to permanently occupy a camping site. By ignoring the local community's right to also hire this camping site, the external providers had created conflict with the local community. Ultimately, however, the external camping providers understood that engaging in conflict with the locals would hinder the long-term viability of their business, leading them to leave the campsite. This confirms Scheyvens and Cheer (2022) findings that the success of PA tourism businesses depends significantly on the active participation and cooperation of the local community.

The research findings advance understandings of disparities between winners and losers in accessing available natural resources such as land and water in Ranakeliya, within the context of Yala PA tourism. The research findings also reveal local perceptions that

certain politicians support rich outsiders in engaging in illicit activities for personal advantage. For instance, these politicians support wealthy outsiders who are unlawfully acquiring local lands from local chena farmers and authorise hotel or campsite construction within the boundaries of the Yala PA. The local community lacks access to the Yoda tank reservation area, while outsiders have constructed hotels by encroaching upon the reserved land. These findings align with the conclusions portrayed by L. S. Stone et al. (2022) and Sinha et al. (2012), highlighting the tendency of elite outsiders in PA tourism to exploit and misuse local resources. Scarcity of access to clean drinking water within the community is not restricted to the drought season alone but persists throughout the year. In order to access safe drinking water, the community is required to bear a financial cost. The public infrastructure cannot adequately meet the area's water demand, primarily due to the substantial water requirements stemming from PA tourism. This finding aligns with the outcomes of Eshun and Tichaawa (2019) research conducted in Mombasa. The Ranakeliya community suffers from kidney diseases, which are predominantly attributed to the inadequate availability of safe drinking water.

There are also disparities between insiders (local people) and outside elites in terms of engagement in Yala PA tourism where outsiders exploit local prospects, such as employment opportunities. For instance, many local young men decide to work as safari jeep drivers, whereas the owners of these profitable jeep businesses live outside Ranakeliya. Likewise, hotels owned by outsiders appoint skilled management staff from external sources, offering them high salaries, while members of the local community lack training for skilled positions and are often relegated to low-paying jobs. This causes substantial economic leakage from the Yala region to other areas or even overseas, which is the case for many other developing countries (Sinha et al., 2012; Snyman, 2019; Spenceley & Snyman, 2016; M. T. Stone et al., 2022).

The evidence from developing contexts reconfirms that the presence of 'winners and losers' (outsiders and insiders) dynamic is not limited to Yala (Bollig, 2016; Massé, 2016). In most cases, the tourism industry relies heavily on private sector support, primarily from outside the tourist destination (Mayaka & Prasad, 2012; United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2015). Snyman (2019) presents several examples from various countries, demonstrating how these elites only appear when the benefits start to accrue. Alternatively, a study based in Botswana highlights the ability of elites to influence destination development and transmit the benefits to the local community through PA tourism by achieving tourism infrastructure development (Spenceley &

Snyman, 2016). PhD research provides solid evidence of the need to implement a mechanism to navigate and monitor the involvement of the private sector (outsiders) in Yala PA tourism.

Ensuring equal access to resources for all stakeholders is crucial to enhancing livelihoods and community development through social transformation. However, this has been hindered in developing countries by intermediaries such as government institutions (formally) and social relationships (informally) (Shoeb-Ur-Rahman et al., 2020). This current study highlights the need to create opportunities for all stakeholders to address these challenges, including active participation of the local community in decision-making processes related to PA tourism and natural resource management. Establishing a decision-making process is necessary to gather opinions from all PA tourism stakeholders. Specifically, in the case of Yala and Ranakeliya, which exhibit a complex socioecological relationship, this platform needs to enhance the sense of responsibility of all the stakeholders and alleviate conflicts regarding resource allocation. Establishing collaborative decision-making processes would enable the community to voice their aspirations and development priorities. However, it is vital to understand the power dynamics distributed between the different stakeholder groups within Yala PA tourism as it is only by understanding these power dynamics that the local community can be effectively empowered to pursue their desired opportunities (such as employment or business ventures) in PA tourism.

The notion of winners and losers can be seen in other examples from the case study when community livelihoods and natural resource management are threatened by the impact of the tourism industry. Findings highlight the issues that arise when outsiders construct hotels and campsites within the Yala PA and install electric fencing to prevent access to these areas by wild elephants. Eventually, the elephants roam into nearby villages and chena farms, due to their reduced habitat and food within the forest. As a result, the locals incur costs associated with the destruction of their chena crops, which in most cases serve as the sole source of livelihood for their families. Meanwhile, the outsiders profit from offering accommodation to high-value ecotourists. Even though the locals raised objections to the construction of hotels inside Yala, their voices were never heard by the authorities. This reinforces the need for collaborative decision-making processes that involve the local community. Lecchini et al. (2021) reflected on a similar incident on Bora Bora Island in the Pacific and concluded that “the [locals’] fight to preserve the richness of nature is never won” (p. 8). Addressing the weaknesses related to the ‘winners

and losers' dynamic in Yala is imperative for securing the long-term sustainability of PA tourism, community development and fostering the community's commitment to supporting conservation efforts.

### **7.1.3 Human–elephant conflict**

Elephants are an important attractor for tourists visiting Yala, yet they have emerged as a significant threat to chena farmers and pose the foremost challenge to park management's conservation efforts. The primary impediment to managing the wild elephants while also keeping the community safe is the lack of a positive relationship between the park management and the local community. This finding supports opinions held by several authors, suggesting that effective management of PA tourism holds the potential to eradicate human–elephant conflicts in Yala (Duminduhewa et al., 2020; Nsonsi et al., 2018; Rathnayake, 2021). In this research, members of the local community were involved in mapping the areas prone to human–elephant conflicts and the findings presented here will enable policymakers to allocate resources exactly where they are needed and expedite plans to mitigate the issue. Fernando et al. (2021) assert that nearly 70% of wild elephants roam outside protected areas in Sri Lanka, increasing the number of human–elephant interactions outside the parks. The *number* of elephants roaming outside Yala did not emerge through the findings of this research, but the *locations* where they roam were identified. The community marked the locations and identified the area wild elephants roam the most, namely the area between Koragahaulpotha, Viharamahadevi pura and Nimalawa (see Figure 6.29).

Egri et al. (2021) study discovered the spatial and temporal trends of human–wildlife conflicts across India and identified hotspots to bring to the attention of authorised parties areas of the country where plans to mitigate human–wildlife conflicts were needed. In contrast, this study used community participatory mapping to focus on a specific local area (Yala) to label and identify hotspots where human–elephant conflicts exist. The map makes the most of important local knowledge and can be used as a tool to guide park management and the DWC to create policies and plans to reduce the risk of conflict between humans and wild elephants.

To better understand the nature of human–elephant conflicts and their impact on the lives of residents in the local community, this research has revealed the primary factors contributing to the human–elephant conflict. The main issue is elephants roaming through the villages, consuming the chena crops and scavenging for food at the Kithalalanda

dumping site. The findings reveal several reasons why elephants venture into villages, including there being inadequate food and water resources within the park during the dry season, limited natural habitat space, inadequate electric fence maintenance, absence of wildlife corridors between parks for elephant migration, and a lack of coordination between environmental institutions.

The current study has found that the impacts of the human–elephant conflicts in the Yala area are significant – such as human deaths, crops eaten and properties damaged – and are similar to the impacts of human–elephant conflicts found by other researchers in many Asian and African countries (Fernando et al., 2005; Laws, 2021; Rubino et al., 2020; World Bank, 2010). As found in this research, in many developing countries, park management and the local community are disconnected due to human–elephant conflicts (Cui et al., 2021; Terada et al., 2021). Cui et al. (2021) study on the escalating effects of wildlife tourism on human–wildlife conflict in Hainan, China, reflects that human–wildlife conflicts are challenging for both social and ecological systems. The present study’s findings are consistent with previous studies’ and reflect that the local community who live close to the park are the victims of human–elephant conflicts, while PA tourism returns fewer benefits to them (Laws, 2021; Rubino et al., 2020).

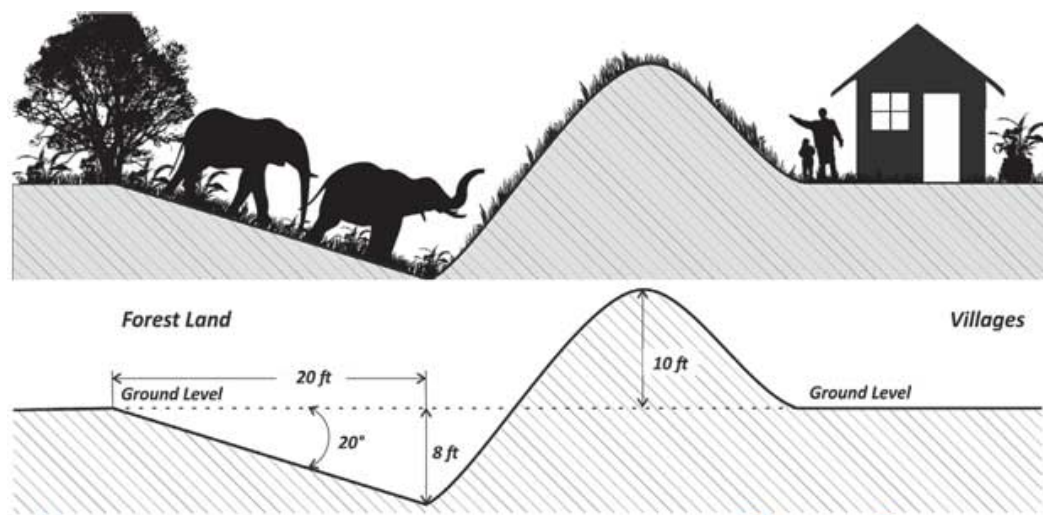
Köpke et al. (2021) elaborated on the human–elephant conflict in Yala: “The people living in surrounding villages do not profit adequately from the park, while they bear the burden of elephant intrusion into their homes and fields” (p. 7). He traces the ‘spatial politics’ in and outside of the Yala PA and how Yala’s neoliberal landscape negatively impacts the neighbouring communities while ‘commodifying nature’ as a global ecotourism destination. The parties who gain the most economic benefits from PA tourism do not understand or address the issues of human–elephant conflicts. Köpke concluded that socioeconomic and cultural aspects of human–elephant conflict in Sri Lanka are inadequately described and that additional research should concentrate on the fundamental causes of human–elephant conflict.

### **Community solutions to reduce human–elephant conflicts**

To date, park management initiatives to reduce the risk of human–elephant conflicts have focused on discouraging chena farming and creating alternative means to support livelihoods of the local community, such as aloe vera plantations. These initiatives were instigated through establishing the local YWC. The traditional chena farmers, however, did not want to lose their lands and were reticent to engage in alternative forms of farming.

This research revealed the local community has the knowledge to come up with their own practical solutions to the human–elephant conflict in Yala; for example, how the risk of human–elephant conflict can be reduced by maintaining the electric fence, relocating problem elephants, and growing thorny plants like lemons. The community members involved in the mapping exercises also suggested a more sustainable and cost-effective method to replace the electrical fence – the slider-bank system. The slider-bank system works on the basis that due to their very nature and size, elephants cannot climb steep hills or navigate deep trenches, thus a slider bank will provide a protective barrier to the villages. Figure 7.2 illustrates the slider-bank system and how it can be a barrier to elephants trying to access a village.

**Figure 7.2 The slider-bank system**



Source: Biodiversity Sri Lanka (n.d.).

The community’s awareness of the slider-bank system was an unexpected finding and provided evidence of the capacity of local people who live adjacent to a PA to express their own needs and preferences, and provide a useful and achievable solution (Beeton, 2006). This finding also reinforces the need for collaborative decision-making processes that are inclusive of local communities to provide solutions for issues that emerge as a result of PA tourism. Previous research conducted on the human–elephant conflict in Yala (Benadusi, 2014; Rathnayake, 2021) and elsewhere in Sri Lanka (Fernando et al., 2005; Köpke et al., 2021; World Bank, 2010) has suggested different technological, biological and managerial approaches, but none have proposed the slider-bank system (Rajapakse, 2021; Wijesinghe, 2021). The slider-bank system is a cost-effective and low-maintenance approach that only requires labour during the initial construction process, and workers to

build the system are easy to find in the village (Biodiversity Sri Lanka, n.d.). The findings indicate that the community is willing to provide free labour if they believe a more appropriate mitigation approach is adopted. The findings suggest that the sociocultural context and local knowledge should be considered when adopting a mitigating strategy in a particular place for human–elephant conflict. Culling overpopulated wild elephants is practised in some African contexts (Buzinde et al., 2014; Koot, 2019; Mutanga et al., 2017). However, due to the Buddhist philosophical influence to ‘refrain from harming life’, this is not feasible in the Thissamaharama area or elsewhere in Sri Lanka. Concomitantly, the elephant population in Sri Lanka has declined by almost 65% since the turn of the 19th century due to loss of the elephants’ natural habitats and significant increases in the human population; elephants, therefore, are protected under Sri Lankan law (World Wildlife Fund, n.d.).

### **PA tourism for elephant conservation**

PA tourism brings significant economic value to Yala, potentially providing the DWC with the financial capacity to combat human–elephant conflicts. Miththapala’s (2018) study focused on how much a Sri Lankan elephant is worth in terms of tourism income, by calculating how much income each park (Yala, Minneriya, and Udawalawe) generates through entrance fees and adding that to the income from the hotels and jeeps around Yala. According to Mettapala’s study, a Yala elephant is worth USD38,659 per annum, and an average Sri Lankan elephant is worth USD27,000. However, how much PA tourism income is actually allocated to conservation actions for wild elephants in Yala (e.g., to maintain the electrical fence) is yet to be determined by the park management or the DWC and is dependent upon the availability of resources (e.g., funding).

The findings of this PhD research highlight that PA tourism is a significant contributor to local economic development and wildlife conservation, which is consistent with Terada et al. (2021) study on local tolerance of human–elephant conflict in Gabon. Previous studies based on Yala and other NPs in Sri Lanka show that international tourists are willing to pay more if PA tourism can support protecting not only the elephants but also the local community (Duminduhewa et al., 2020; Rathnayake, 2021). The research also indicates the value of educating the community on the importance of conserving elephants. The current study has found the local community is willing to contribute to the conservation initiatives of Yala by providing financial or voluntary support.

Raising awareness among PA tourists visiting Yala of the human–elephant conflicts in the area may encourage financial or volunteer support for elephant conservation initiatives established by park management. There are examples from other nations where initiatives exist to protect wild animals. For example, in New Zealand, a Sri Lankan elephant, Anjalee, at Auckland Zoo served as an ‘ambassador’ to raise awareness of the plight of decreasing elephant populations, educate visitors, and to promote the Zoo’s efforts to protect animals in Sri Lanka, and raise money for the Zoo’s Conservation Fund to invest in tracking collars for Sri Lankan elephants (Pendergrast, 2019). The aim of the tracking project was to put a collar on the leading female elephant so that scientists would know where her herd goes and how they behave (Slade, 2015). This PhD research argues that if one elephant ambassador (such as Anjalee) who is in a captive setting can raise funds for elephant conservation in Sri Lanka, then Yala park management can also raise conservation funds by educating visitors to the park and encouraging those who wish to contribute to a conservation fund. The park is home for 500 wild elephants in their natural setting and these elephants are a key attractor to over 500,000 international tourists every year.

Several researchers recommend following a human–elephant coexistence model to mitigate these conflicts in Sri Lanka, such as implementing seasonal farming fences (electrical) which can be powered during the cultivation season and inactivated after harvesting, so allowing elephants to eat any crop that has been left unharvested (Fernando et al., 2005; Köpke et al., 2021; Wijesinghe, 2021; World Bank, 2010). Other researchers have examined how PA tourism can create a human–elephant coexistence model in African contexts such as Congo and Zimbabwe (Nsonsi et al., 2018; Ntuli & Muchapondwa, 2017). These researchers have found that the local community is willing to adopt human–elephant co-existing scenarios if the substantial benefits of tourism outweigh the cost of living with elephants. The research presented in this thesis did not assess the feasibility of establishing the human–elephant coexistence model in the Yala area nor did it gather the community’s views on doing so (as this was not the main focus of this study). However, the research findings emphasise the value of educating the local community on conserving and participating in the conservation process in Yala, which is essential for mitigating human–elephant conflict. Cui et al. (2021) suggested that stakeholders such as communities, private tourism operators and conservation actors need to negotiate ways to adjust the impediments of the park (e.g., wildlife threats) for the sake of the economic benefits gained through PA tourism. As the position of local communities



is relatively weak, Cui et al. (2021) recommended establishing a unique ecological compensation project from the government to control the wildlife damage and maintain the ecological and socioeconomical balance between tourism, the local community and wildlife. Yala park management has attempted to adopt this approach by establishing the YWC. Even if the community engagement in conservation through the YWC partially fulfils this requirement, the lack of direct connection between this YWC and PA tourism is an impediment to managing sustainable PA tourism in Yala.

## **7.2 A strengths-based approach for inclusive community development through PA tourism**

Strengths-based approaches value a community's strengths, assets, capacities, skills, and resources and help people to build on these qualities. This section offers a deep understanding of the collective strengths to be found in the local communities surrounding Yala. I argue for inclusive community development through PA tourism by drawing on the strengths of local entrepreneurs, women, and young stewards of nature, and by cherishing local culture and traditional knowledge. This approach will provide a way forward to reorient PA tourism in inclusive ways, build community resilience and address past issues.

While acknowledging the impediments to sustainable PA tourism development, it is also important to identify the strengths that are the backbone of Yala PA tourism. Key strengths are found in local entrepreneurship and female leadership, narrated in this section's stories of 'business makers' and 'women warriors'. Local entrepreneurs, the business makers of the local community, play a significant role in driving local economic growth through PA tourism and present unique experiences for visitors with the local community's hospitality. The inspiring narrative of the women warriors of PA tourism in Yala highlights the important leadership roles played by women in helping conserve the forest, bring about productive change in their communities, and promoting gender equality through inclusivity.

This research has identified a number of ways to develop Yala PA tourism to foster sustainable community development and encourage local participation in conservation efforts. The first way is to educate and involve the younger generation of the community in efforts to protect nature, and this is presented in the 'young stewards of nature' theme. Another way is to enhance and incorporate cultural elements in the PA tourism visitor

experience. This would not only raise the visitor's cultural appreciation of the people who live close to PAs, it would also optimise opportunities to create income for the local community. This topic is addressed in the final story of Yala, 'cherishing local culture'. The strengths of local people (especially the younger generation), their culture and traditional ways of doing things, and their hopes and dreams for the future are at the core of reorienting PA tourism in Yala to achieve sustainable community development.

### **7.2.1 Business makers**

The inspirational tales of the local entrepreneurs or business makers highlight the resilience and determination of local people who have successfully established thriving enterprises linked to Yala PA tourism, and so are contributing to the community's overall development. This research has identified that fewer than 5% of the community run their own PA tourism businesses. However, it is worthwhile to acknowledge their strengths and explore what has led these local business makers to become entrepreneurs of PA tourism. Drawing on the stories told by local business makers, this research presents unique findings about how these local community members chose the type of business to establish, how they entered entrepreneurship, and their gender.

Local entrepreneurs (men and women) in Ranakeliya discussed the decisions they made to establish their business. How they entered entrepreneurship highlights the value of social networking with other PA tourism stakeholders. Entrepreneurship in Ranakeliya is not confined to only men, as several women (including those who call themselves a 'housewife') have become entrepreneurs.

Local entrepreneurs have primarily invested in the accommodation sector, mainly implementing the 'bed and breakfast' concept. They have built separate accommodation within their home garden or designated a few rooms within their residences. While this service is the primary income source for some, others engage in tourism accommodation as a source of extra income to augment their primary occupation. A notable finding indicates that these local entrepreneurs have invested their pension funds or savings to build accommodation, demonstrating their financial management skills. They have discerningly recognised and managed to leverage opportunities to gain benefits from the emerging PA tourism sector. The decision to invest their savings in tourist accommodation services also reflects the confidence of the local entrepreneurs in the long-term viability of PA tourism in Yala as a reliable source of income.

## **Psychological capital**

In Ranakeliya, local entrepreneurs provide recommendations to PA tourists. Local accommodation providers rely on word-of-mouth recommendations from previous guests, as they do not have dedicated business web pages or promotions apart from a signboard on the road. Even though they have a regular customer base, their businesses often do not generate significant profits, but these local business owners expressed satisfaction with their commercial activities connected to PA tourism. Local small-scale businesses encounter significant challenges in competing with privately owned businesses run by outsiders (de OC Fortes & de Oliveira, 2012). Instead of comparing themselves with the star-graded hotels owned by outsiders in their village, these local accommodation providers tend to appreciate their own achievements and display an optimistic and growth-oriented developed mindset. This finding demonstrates that these local entrepreneurs are characteristically resilient and have the essential mindset required for entrepreneurial success, referred to as *psychological capital* in entrepreneurial academia (Ephrem et al., 2021).

## **The value of social networking**

Two examples from this case study of sustainable community development in Ranakeliya revealed the value of social networking as a path to local entrepreneurship. The two contrasting examples of Markus and Sumane show that a variety of different factors influence whether chena farmers decide to get involved in PA tourism and become entrepreneurs.

Sumane was discouraged by not seeing the value of the resources he has (e.g., tank water) and focused on what he lacks (e.g., skills like English speaking) and what he has no control over (e.g., rain). Sumane was also reluctant to develop a tourism-related business because he had no substantial relationship with community members already involved in PA tourism. Furthermore, Sumane has four children to feed and was not willing to risk starting a new business hoping it would succeed. Markus, on the other hand, did have significant relationships with others in his community who are involved in PA tourism as local tour guides. He is also older than Sumane and has fewer dependents.

Sumane's parental responsibilities and his fear that he did not have the resources to succeed made him cautious about embarking on a new venture. However, his perspective might change if he could establish a relationship with a community member working in

PA tourism, like Markus. This kind of connection might ignite a sense of confidence and inspire Sumane to explore entrepreneurship. Networking with community members who already work in PA tourism is recognised as a potential way to build capacity (Emery & Flora, 2006). For a beginner like Sumane, network connections offer knowledge, guidance, and support (Knollenberg et al., 2022), and might empower him to take the step and follow his entrepreneurial dreams with greater confidence.

### **Women entrepreneurs**

The women business makers in the case study community challenge the commonly held social view that businesses tend to be owned and/or operated by men. The presence of woman business owners in Ranakeliya exemplifies inclusivity and female representation in entrepreneurship, highlighting that even a self-identified ‘housewife’ can transform into a successful businesswoman (Panta & Thapa, 2018). This case study has shed light on the different genders involved in Yala’s local entrepreneurial landscape. The presence of woman business owners signifies a shift in empowering women and recognises their potential to contribute greatly to their community’s economic growth. By breaking obstacles and stereotypes, women entrepreneurs in Ranakeliya act as inspiring role models for business owners, promoting gender equality and indicating the characteristics of a progressive society.

Studies in many contexts have shown that when a mother has a job, she spends her income on the children’s nutrition and education (Browne, 2015; Santoso et al., 2019). Local mother Rani works in PA tourism and spent her income on her daughter’s education, a finding that is similar to that of Emery et al. (2006). Opportunities for women to earn income leads to the social empowerment of women, gender equality through financial independence, participation in leadership roles, and the provision of female role models for future generations (Freund & Hernandez-Maskivker, 2021). Rani’s example demonstrates that the new social relationships built through working in PA tourism give locals opportunities to open their lives to the broader world.

Women entrepreneurship in Yala PA tourism is crucial to achieving the SDG 5- Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Empowering women as business makers can ensure a thriving local economy, reduce poverty, and combat gender inequalities (Panta & Thapa, 2018). Furthermore, women-owned businesses can contribute to creating jobs, generating income and community development. Women entrepreneurs bring creativity, unique perceptions, and novel solutions to PA tourism,

enhancing the overall value of the tourist experience (United Nations Development Programme, 2023a). By fostering the requirements that support women's entrepreneurship in PA tourism, a more inclusive and sustainable future could be created for Ranakeliya, which is in line with the United Nations' SDGs.

### **7.2.2 Women warriors**

The empowering tales of the 'women warriors' in Yala shed light on the significant leadership roles local women play in conservation through the DWC, driving positive change in their community, and nurturing inclusivity and gender equity. Their role as housewives and leaders in the participatory community conservation programme initiated by the Yala park management is unique and valuable for the future of Yala and the community in Ranakeliya. This section discusses the effectiveness of the community women's engagement in the conservation programme, recognising them as 'women warriors' of Yala.

The women of the Ranakeliya community play a variety of roles in their daily lives. They are housewives and mothers, and active members of their neighbourhood. They assume various responsibilities such as managing household chores, including preparing meals and procuring water and firewood, and look after the garden and any domestic animals. They care for children and other adults, like their husband's parents. They sometimes support their husbands in labour-intensive tasks at chena fields. These women are responsible for ensuring their children's education and nutrition, and the overall health and hygiene of their family. As South Asian housewives, the women of this community have household roles and responsibilities that are certainly intensive, yet they depend financially on their husbands.

#### **The Yala Wildlife Committee**

The women of Ranakeliya actively participate in community-level activities and events while their husbands are in paid work during the week. The research findings revealed that female representation and participation in the YWC is significantly higher than their male counterparts'. The YWC in Ranakeliya is totally (100%) led by women. The community women play an essential role in various YWC activities, such as decision making and organising events. Due to the distrust of the park management caused by human–elephant conflicts, these women demarcated boundaries and limits by, for example, implementing electrical fences, when approached by wildlife officers to

establish the YWC. The women's involvement in the YWC is an example of the influential power they hold, their commitment to ensure they have a voice in local matters, and their capacity to drive inclusivity within government agencies.

Following the establishment of the YWC, women in the community requested wildlife officers to arrange a visit to the park and so they could experience the magnificence of the Yala wildlife. Despite living near the park all their lives, the local women could not afford the cost of a jeep safari. The park management organised a cleaning programme to collect rubbish left by tourists inside the park in collaboration with the YWC and the Yala Jeep Society in Yala. During this programme, the park management educated locals about the importance of conserving Yala while the Yala Jeep Society facilitated a wildlife tour for the community participants. As a result, YWC members developed a deep connection to Yala, and a better understanding of their role as wildlife guardians. This outcome can be seen as a win-win situation for all the stakeholders: park management, the Yala Jeep Society, and the local community, as well as for wildlife and the natural environment.

The community women led an initiative to restore the trust between the park management and the Ranakeliya community, shattered decades ago due to a human–elephant conflict. During that incident, some local men acted aggressively, resulting in park management responding violently, arresting the men involved. However, their wives and children suffered the most. Despite this, these women have exercised strength, tolerance, and resilience by overcoming the dark memories and supporting Yala park management's conservation efforts. Now, YWC women leaders collaborate closely with the park management to bridge the gap of trust between the YWO and the rest of the community.

#### *Aloe vera cultivation programme*

The aloe vera cultivation programme enables homemakers to earn an income while caring for their children and household responsibilities. This programme not only empowers women financially but also helps prevent deforestation caused by chena cultivation, so addressing the human–elephant conflict. However, this community conservation programme is still in its early stages and requires more funding and guidance. Research findings indicate that only one-third of the community is involved in the programme, and only 4% believe it contributes to conservation efforts. This highlights the need for greater community participation and collaboration in Ranakeliya. Addressing this issue is the next challenge for these dedicated women.

### *Benefits from the women's involvement with the YWC and PA tourism*

The connection between YWC activities and PA tourism development in Yala is still in its infancy. This study has identified several potential areas where women's participation in conservation can be linked to PA tourism in Yala, generating multiple benefits. These benefits may have different dimensions; for example: *economic benefits* – local community women produce aloe vera beverages to sell to the wildlife tourists; *educational benefits* – local community women participate in and involve their children in YWC activities to pass their passion of conservation to the future generation; and *environmental benefits* – local community women have contributed to reducing the number of illegal activities like deforestation and poaching in Yala by widening their economic opportunities through YWC activities. Furthermore, not only does the women's participation in PA tourism bring benefits to their local community, it also brings benefits to other stakeholders. For example, the park management and guides can make the PA tourists aware of the YWC's community conservation programmes and the benefits these programmes are bringing to the park, wildlife, and local community, and in so doing, enhance the visitors' experience and promote Yala as a destination that practises sustainable tourism. In turn, by promoting Yala as an example of sustainable tourism, park management can open up channels through which to direct visitor support to improve its conservation and community development initiatives; for example, through financial, expert knowledge or voluntary support to the YWC.

The engagement of local women in PA conservation, as demonstrated by examples like Wangari Maathai's Green Belt Movement in Kenya (Maathai, 2003), is not a new concept (Mkono et al., 2021). However, in Sri Lanka, there is a lack of evidence highlighting women's participation in conservation efforts, apart from the case of Knuckles Mountain Range where community women trade their crafts to ecotourists (United Nations Development Programme, 2023a). To my knowledge, this PhD research is the only recent study that (in part) explores women's leadership in conservation within the context of Sri Lankan PA tourism.

### *Reducing poaching*

Women have also played a role in initiatives to reduce wildlife poaching. Examples of effective practices of community-based anti-poaching approaches are found in Nepal, Mozambique and Namibia (Bhatta et al., 2018; Massé et al., 2017). A Zimbabwean model of Akashinga ('the brave one') is an all-women ranger unit that ensures wildlife protection in the former hunting-tourism zones of the country (Mkono et al., 2021). The Akashinga

unit comprises 200 armed and trained rangers (similar to special forces) who patrol eight reserves in the Lower Zambezi to protect the country's iconic wildlife. However, the findings of this research suggest that the anti-poaching approaches (e.g., military based) in other contexts are not appropriate for the social setting in Sri Lanka. A more appropriate strategy is that of livelihood enhancement-based conservation strategies, which provide a better 'fit' for Yala and other PAs in the country. This is in line with the recommendation of Duminduhewa et al.'s (2020) study on Yala.

#### *Commitment to Yala PA conservation goals*

Despite the threats and challenges the local community encounters, all the household survey respondents (100%) expressed their willingness to support conservation initiatives implemented by Yala park management. This level of community support towards PA preservation is crucial for the success of any conservation programme (Kegamba et al., 2022; M. T. Stone et al., 2022). Particularly noteworthy is that this leadership shown by the local community women in conservation in the Yala PA tourism context demonstrates a remarkable commitment to participation, collaboration, capacity building, gender equality and women's empowerment by livelihood enhancement – all outcomes consistent with the United Nations' SDGs (Ferguson, 2011; Pasanchay & Schott, 2021). The community women leaders actively engage in collaborative initiatives with other stakeholders by ensuring that their voices are heard and valued in decision-making processes (Scheyvens, 2000). They promote gender equality as women are empowered to gain economic independence and enhance local livelihoods that support the conservation goals of the Yala PA (Freund & Hernandez-Maskivker, 2021). The women's leadership in Yala PA conservation could foster more sustainable community development and conservation through links with PA tourism, which in turn addresses the gender equality, decent work, and economic growth targets of the SDGs (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2020).

Women's leadership is not uncommon in remote communities but is often overlooked and underrepresented when men hold the formal leadership positions, as in Asian societies like Sri Lanka. However, informally, women tend to possess substantial (unrecognised) influence despite the prevailing power structures that prioritise male leadership. The current research findings challenge the conventional power dynamics in Asian societies, as observed by the case of women leadership within YWC.



The women of Ranakeliya devote time to their leadership roles in the YWC despite having numerous household and community-level duties. They have courage to insist on better outcomes for their communities (insisting on demarcation of boundaries and the installation of electric fences, as examples), and can be viewed as ‘fighting the good fight’ in their conservation efforts. Therefore, the women of Ranakeliya are referred to as ‘women warriors’ in this story of Yala. These women warriors bear the responsibility of safeguarding the future of Yala while ensuring that their children can sleep peacefully without fearing the threat from Yala at night: the elephants. As a result, the children will grow up developing a deep affection for elephants rather than fear of them, which will, in turn, raise their role as future guardians of Yala, surpassing the present generation in stewardship.

### **7.2.3 Young stewards of nature**

The primary goal of PAs is to safeguard natural resources and preserve biodiversity for future generations. Yala serves as an example of a PA dedicated to fulfilling this mission. Yala strives to ensure the long-term protection of its biodiversity, allowing for the continued enjoyment and education of its natural values through various strategies and policies. This section will examine the current involvement of the younger generation in the area and explore future possibilities for protecting Yala. Specifically, it aims to explore the present efforts of park management in educating the youth in the case study area, discussing of young local members’ current engagement in conservation and potential future avenues for preserving Yala.

Currently, the park management at Yala is focused on implementing an educational programme to raise awareness among the younger generation in Thissamaharama about the environmental value of Yala. The programme aims to enhance their understanding of Yala’s biological importance by introducing key wildlife species like elephants and fostering a sense of accountability for their protection. However, the present educational conservation programme conducted by the YWO focuses only on Buddhist children’s presence in Sunday School and overlooks the larger Muslim society in Kirinda.

Implementing conservation initiatives within a multi-ethnic society at the park’s borders requires comprehensive education incorporating all ethnic groups and communities. The current programme takes place once every year and focuses exclusively on a single ethnic group – this is insufficient. Some Buddhist children do not attend Sunday School in Sri Lanka. Consequently, the programme fails to include not only other ethnic communities

but also its intended audience within the Buddhist community. There is limited funding to expand this conservation education programme. This research suggests that stakeholders, such as tourists and the DWC, should be aware of the limited funding to encourage policymakers to allocate additional financial support to the education programme and/or acquire greater support from PA tourists.

Academics in the PA tourism literature have paid little attention to children's education as a strategy for conservation. However, some scholars have highlighted that younger individuals, particularly in Asian and African countries, are more optimistic than adults about PA tourism and conservation. Several authors purport that children and young people understand conservation issues and are more educated than previous generations (Mutanga et al., 2015; Shibia, 2010). Jane Goodall, a renowned expert on chimpanzees and conservation activist, initiated the Roots and Shoots programme in 1991, which promotes environmentalism among children in over 100 countries. She emphasises, "What is the point of working so hard, fighting for the environment, if we are not raising new generations to be better stewards than we are?" (Brzezinski, 2018, p. 1). This programme guides children to recognise and volunteer on socioenvironmental issues in their community with support from teachers and parents. There is no similar youth-oriented conservation programme designed for Yala or elsewhere in Sri Lanka.

This research highlights that involving children in Yala conservation activities organised by the YWC can effectively educate them about Yala's value, surpassing traditional classroom teaching that relies solely on providing information and statistics. Furthermore, the research reveals another crucial finding: that the local community already knows Yala's value but lacks an emotional connection to nature and wildlife. Poverty and the constant threat of elephants encroaching on agricultural lands further weaken this bond. Aligned with these research findings, a study conducted by Lachmann et al. (2021) focusing on environmental education programmes implemented in PAs of Petrópolis, Brazil, demonstrates the role of children as agents of empathy towards the cause of nature conservation. Lachmann et al.'s study established that children ranging from kindergarten to high-school levels should participate in playful activities within PAs, not solely for promoting environmental awareness but also to cultivate an emotional bond with these spaces. Such a connection is crucial to create human (childhood) memories, ultimately shaping the development of empathy and commitment to conservation efforts throughout their lifetime. Lachmann et al.'s (2021) research, however, concentrated solely on PA conservation and did not consider PA tourism. The study presented in this thesis,

therefore, extends Lachmann et al.'s earlier research by asserting that a comprehensive educational programme for the conservation of PAs, targeted at children, can be developed by integrating PA tourism and fostering collaborative participation among all stakeholder groups in Yala.

This current research suggests that storytelling can be a powerful tool to establish a deep emotional link between children and Yala. Engaging children in conservation programmes through the arts and cultural elements can shape their perceptions and attitudes towards Yala. For example, teaching students traditional songs or dances, such as the elephant dance or traditional hut songs, as part of their school's arts subjects can help them grasp the value of conserving Yala and its wildlife. Implementing such a participatory-based educational approach would contribute to nurturing a future generation that values and protects Yala more effectively within the local community and when these individuals become involved in PA tourism, such as jeep drivers or wildlife trackers.

#### **7.2.4 Cherishing local culture**

PA tourism extends beyond nature and wildlife, as dedicated ecotourists also seek to experience the essence of the local community in their chosen destinations. The tale of 'cherishing local culture' proposes three approaches to incorporating cultural elements into the context of Yala PA tourism: promoting local life and culture to PA tourists; narrating stories about the place, its people, and their connection with nature; and enhancing cultural harmony by centralising the Yatra pilgrims.

The cultural elements in PA tourism are not widely discussed in Sri Lankan literature (Duminduhewa et al., 2020). However, evidence from several studies in developing settings have highlighted that local cultural elements are ignored or barely incorporated into the PA tourism experience (Akama & Kieti, 2007; Eshun & Tichaawa, 2019; He, 2023). This is also the case with Yala, as the PA tourists do not adequately appreciate the cultural elements surrounding the park. This research provides empirical evidence, discovered through the case study of the local community of Ranakeliya, on how to embed cultural dimensions into Yala PA tourism, with some practical implications.

#### **Promoting local life and culture to PA tourists**

Promoting local life and culture to PA tourists is an essential part of the visitor experience that is currently lacking in Yala PA tourism. The engagement of the host community in

PA tourism facilitates encounters with tourists at the occupational level (e.g., a jeep driver) but such encounters do not provide the tourist with an authentic local lifestyle experience. The findings of this research revealed that PA tourism in Yala currently lacks sufficient incorporation of cultural elements such as the local legends, history and heritage, handicrafts, spiritual values, religious activities, traditional livelihood practices, events, festivals and celebrations, food, music, dancing, and clothing. Furthermore, the case study community in Ranakeliya does not produce handicrafts as souvenirs targeting the PA tourist market.

Increasing visitors' awareness of local productions and businesses can stimulate the curiosity and desire of PA tourists to engage with local handicrafts, fostering an appreciation for the local culture while supporting these businesses. This suggestion is supported by Duminduhewa et al. (2020) study that found that PA tourists are willing to pay higher ticket prices if tourism activities contribute to local community development.

PA tourists to Sri Lanka are currently not made aware of significant cultural elements and traditional sustainable practices between humans and wildlife that have been valued since ancient times in Sri Lanka; for example, the 'bird sacrificer' (see below) and the traditional model of coexistence between humans and wildlife. Embedding these ancient practices and cultural elements into the PA tourism package will enhance the experience of the visitor and, moreover, contribute to PA protection goals by recognising the long-term viability of traditional conservation methods.

A traditional cultivation practice involves reserving one plot in each cluster of paddy fields as a feeding area for birds. This area is called the 'bird sacrificer' (*kurulu paluva*), and serves as a solution to mitigate harvest losses caused by birds' eating rice (Damayanthi & Star, 2019). When birds become accustomed to feeding in a specific plot, they refrain from consuming crops from the villagers' fields. This approach effectively manages human–wildlife conflicts without resorting to harmful methods.

Around a century ago, during harvest, village farmers would call wild elephants to assist in transporting the harvested crops from the paddy fields to their homes or the market (Senarathna, 2022). The elephants would become accustomed to the task and visit the village, where they were treated well with desirable foods not readily available in the forests. After the harvest had been completed, the remaining paddies were left for the elephants to consume, and once the remaining crops had been eaten, the elephants

naturally returned to the forest. Western theories describe this as *human–wildlife coexistence*, yet this harmonious cooperative interaction, based on mutual respect, has been practised in Sri Lanka 100 years ago (Anuradha et al., 2019).

Elephants in Sri Lanka are not only a wildlife resource but also considered a living heritage as they are embedded in the Sri Lankan tradition; for example, domesticated elephants are included in religious processions. PA tourists could be educated about the cultural significance of the elephant to the Sri Lanka people by, for example: (1) learning about how elephants are used in processions in the temples like Uddagandara or Kataragama; (2) being shown the elephant dance or *gajaga wannama*, which is danced by the people in the Kandyan dancing tradition; and/or (3) joining in musical performances of, for example, folk poems such as hut poems or *pal kavi*, which are sung by chena farmers to keep themselves awake when they stay in their tree huts overnight to protect their chena crops from the elephants. This research revealed a lack of activities apart from the wildlife tour for PA tourists who spend a few days around Yala. If such cultural elements were inserted into the tourist's experience in some way, visitors would gain a deeper insight into the beliefs, values and practices of the local people and 'place'. Furthermore, adding a cultural dimension into the PA tourism experience would be economically beneficial for the local community.

## **Storytelling**

### *During wildlife tours*

This research suggests a simple but direct way of embedding cultural elements into the PA tourism experience is by telling stories about the place, people, and their relationship with nature to the visitors during the wildlife tour. Stories about how farmers and wildlife historically lived harmoniously together would enhance the tourist experience. Such stories could also connect with ongoing conservation efforts led by local women, thereby benefiting the YWC by capturing tourists' interest in the conservation initiatives of Yala. Furthermore, telling such stories effectively encourages tourists to behave responsibly during their tour and actively engage in conservation practices (Squires, 2022).

### *The 'tank-pagoda' and 'village-temple' sustainability model*

After the wildlife tour, opportunities could be created for visitors to explore paddy cultivation techniques and/or tanks (water reservoirs) in the Thissamaharama region. The ancient self-sufficiency concept in rural villages is called the 'tank-pagoda' and 'village-temple' model (Dewapura et al., 2020). The Thissamaharama area is an excellent location

to observe this ancient self-sufficiency concept in practice. The concept entails a connection between tanks and pagodas, where the ancient inhabitants used the soil excavated from tank construction to build pagodas in the village temple. The ancestors were dedicated to safeguarding the tanks, which served as the primary water sources in the dry zone for sustaining paddy cultivation (Dewapura et al., 2020). They prioritised the protection of the tanks' water sources, such as streams, and the forests in the catchment areas of those streams – a practice which these days we would call 'environmental sustainability'. They valued safeguarding Nature to ensure their economic independence through paddy cultivation and food security – a practice which these days we would call 'economic sustainability'.

The relationship between village and temple exemplifies the interconnection between spirituality and society. The villagers maintained close contact with the village temple and lived under the guidance of the Buddhist monks, thus ensuring social harmony – a practice which these days we would call 'social sustainability'. By prioritising both environmental – and hence economic – sustainability and social sustainability, this ancient self-sufficient model in Sri Lanka endured for centuries, until colonisation (Dayaratne, 2018).

The concept of sustainability in the Western world is different from the ancient Sri Lankan sustainability model. In ancient Sri Lanka, the priorities for sustainability were distinct, with *environmental sustainability* taking precedence to safeguard forests and water sources to preserve livelihoods (*economic sustainability*). The accomplishment of self-sufficiency and economic sustainability increased the likelihood of achieving social sustainability in the village. The modern Western perspective of sustainability aims to achieve sustainability through the SDGs (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023a) which prioritises social then economic and then environmental sustainability – which is the reverse order of the ancient Sri Lankan model. In contrast, this research focuses on achieving the community's economic development through PA tourism, leading to social development, and ultimately contributing to environmental sustainability. In Sri Lanka's current society, economic gains are highly valued, serving as an incentive for promoting conservation efforts. The valuing of economic development can be seen in the empirical evidence of the YWC in this research. Appreciating these sustainability models simply and engagingly through storytelling will cater to ecotourists' interest in enhancing their knowledge and experience of PA tourism, which is currently lacking in Yala.

## **Centralising the Yatra pilgrims**

Improving cultural harmony through centralising the Yatra pilgrims is a mutually beneficial strategy to cherish the intercultural understanding within Sri Lankan society while uplifting the PA tourism experience in Yala. This study investigates a PA situated in a region where people characterising the primary religions of Sri Lanka (Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam) converge during religious events. Given the ethnically diverse makeup of this area, people have interconnections between cultures. For instance, followers of one religion also participate in the rituals of other religions; for example, Buddhists worship at the Hindu temple of Kataragama. This research indicates that PA tourists are not made aware of and so do not experience or appreciate the cultural richness and diversity of the different religions practised in the Yala area.

The Yatra pilgrimage across Yala is a vibrant religious activity with a unique aspect of human engagement with this PA. The pilgrimage is a reminder of the importance of Yala to a particular group of people with a spiritual belief and connection to the destination, even if they are not living nearby. The Yatra pilgrims play a crucial role in PA tourism, as they share the same natural surroundings with PA tourists but for spiritual purposes. However, the case study research has revealed no indication that PA tourists are being made aware of the Yatra in Yala. The Yatra route traverses breathtaking natural landscapes, offering opportunities for camping, stargazing and wilderness cooking, which would also be appreciated by ecotourists visiting Yala.

Despite the minimal economic benefits Yatra devotees bring to the destination community, their pilgrimage holds immense potential for generating social advantages for the entire nation. The Yatra pilgrimage symbolises cultural harmony (McGilvray, 2010), opening a pathway to widen the respect and trust between different ethnic and religious groups, which is fundamental to spreading national peace in Sri Lanka. While the sociocultural benefits of the Yatra pilgrimage outweigh its economic benefits, if the pilgrimage could be combined in some way with tours for dedicated ecotourists interested in this very significant annual cultural event, the pilgrimage could undoubtedly generate substantial economic benefits for the local community.

Nevertheless, while the Yatra pilgrimage in Yala has the potential to offer advantages to the destination, it is crucial not to overlook its very real costs, particularly the intensified environmental issues associated with the arrival of Yatra pilgrims, such as the solid waste pollution generated by the camping pilgrims. Furthermore, in recent times the pilgrims

have been joined by young groups, including non-Hindu spiritual seekers and travel vloggers, who tend to over-promote the activity (Best of Ceylon, n.d.). Currently, Sri Lanka's army, NGOs, youth groups and St. John's support park management to facilitate the Yatra pilgrims (Harrigan, 2019). But in the future, further strategies and mechanisms need be established to ameliorate the negative impacts of the annual pilgrimage through the Yala PA, especially if Yatra activities are extended to a broader range of PA tourists.

### **7.3 Chapter summary**

This chapter has presented seven 'stories' of Yala: political interference, winners and losers, human–elephant conflict, business makers, women warriors, young stewards of nature, and cherishing local culture. Within each story, challenges, weaknesses, strengths, and prospects for Yala PA tourism have been explored.

The first section of the chapter discussed the impediments to manage sustainable PA tourism in Yala. The research has identified political interference as the primary impediment to sustainable community development in Yala. Section 7.1 also discussed and emphasised the importance of equitable power distribution among stakeholders through collaborative participation in PA tourism. A second key impediment to managing sustainable PA tourism in Yala is the current 'winners and losers' situation, where affluent outsiders benefit from preferential access to resources and government support while marginalising the local community. The current power dynamics have led to opportunities to gain financial benefits from PA tourism being exploited by outsiders instead of PA tourism bringing benefits to the local community. Addressing this inequitable power situation is vital for ensuring the long-term sustainability of PA tourism, promoting community development, and increasing community engagement in conservation initiatives. The third impediment to managing sustainable PA tourism in Yala is the ever-present problem of human–elephant conflict. Elephants pose a significant threat to chena farmers and so reduce the local community's willingness to be involved in conservation efforts in the park, despite elephants being a popular tourist attraction. The study suggests directly connecting the YWC and PA tourism to address the conflict more effectively.

The second part of this chapter discussed a strengths-based approach for inclusive community development through PA tourism. The strengths observed include local entrepreneurship and the leadership of women from the local Ranakeliya community, exemplified by the stories of 'Business makers' and 'Women warriors'. The business



makers have successfully established prosperous enterprises in Yala PA tourism, contributing to community development and demonstrating the potential for economic benefits to the local community from PA tourism through entrepreneurial ventures. The women warriors play significant leadership roles, overcoming conservation challenges through collaboration with the DWC, and promoting inclusivity and gender equity for sustainable community development.

Additionally, the case study of Ranakeliya has cast a light on the efforts of the YWO and the women from the local community to educate and involve the younger generation in nature conservation. These young people will grow to become ‘young stewards of nature’ in Yala.

The chapter has also explored various avenues for developing Yala PA tourism through ‘cherishing local culture’. Suggestions include enhancing cultural elements to enrich visitor experiences, fostering cultural appreciation, and ways to generate income for the local community.

Effective management of Yala PA tourism is essential to promote sustainable community development and conservation initiatives. This requires addressing the impediments associated with PA tourism, while simultaneously nurturing the strengths of the local community and the wider Yala area to optimise development opportunities in a sustainable community-centric manner. In order to achieve this goal, the following conclusions chapter is dedicated to providing recommendations and future research avenues.

## Chapter 8: CONCLUSION

*“It is not what we have that will make us a great nation; it is the way in which we use it.”*

-President Theodore Roosevelt’s speech about National Parks  
[he is often called as “the conservation president”]  
(Theodore Roosevelt, 1886)

This doctoral research focuses on managing protected area (PA) tourism for sustainable community development and enhancing the community’s desire to embrace conservation goals in the case of the Yala PA. The thesis has focused on achieving three objectives: 1) to explore and explain the relationships between key stakeholder groups engaged in PA tourism practices; 2) to understand the community-level impacts of PA tourism using a case study approach; and 3) to make theoretical and methodological contributions at the intersection of the current literature on PA tourism, sustainable community development and conservation.

This chapter is organised into six main sections. The first section elaborates the key stakeholder groups’ engagement in Yala PA tourism. The second section draws the Yala PA tourism impacts on the local community in Ranakeliya; and also highlights four key assertions for enhancing community development through PA tourism management. The third section outlines the theoretical and methodological contribution of this research while the concrete outcome of the study suggests future advancement of indicators to measure sustainable community development resulting from Yala PA tourism. The fourth section discusses practical implications of the research findings for the community, PA management and policymakers, providing guidance on managing Yala PA tourism for the benefit of both the local community and conservation efforts. The fifth section discusses the limitations of the study and suggests potential directions for future research. The chapter concludes by providing final reflections.

### 8.1 The key stakeholder groups engagement in Yala PA tourism

#### 8.1.1 The key stakeholder groups

The next two subsections answer the first research question: “Who are the key stakeholders connected with PA tourism, and what are their relationships?” The case of the Yala PA and its local community of Ranakeliya reveals a wide range of stakeholders interested in Yala PA tourism. Stakeholder theory was used to analyse and understand the

relationship patterns between all the stakeholders (see Section 5.3). The key stakeholders and relationships related to Yala PA tourism are summarised below. These stakeholders have been classified into seven groups: government, tourism service providers, policymakers, Yala park management, local employees, tourists and the local community (see Table 8.1).

**Table 8.1 Stakeholder groups in Yala PA tourism**

	<b>Group</b>	<b>Stakeholders</b>
1	Government	The state parliament
2	Tourism service providers	YJS, jeep owners, restaurant owners, accommodation owners, and other service providers
3	Policymakers	RC, DSD, DWC, FD, SLTDA, MWFC, RDA, UDA
4	Yala park management	YWO
5	Local employees	Trackers, jeep drivers, other community employees
6	Local community	YWC, community leaders, VO
7	Tourist	Domestic visitors, international visitors

The stakeholder grouping is based on the functional behaviours of each stakeholder and the contribution they make to Yala PA tourism. The policymakers group comprises a range of public organisations and departments that facilitate the number of tourism development services and establish PA tourism businesses in the Thissamaharama area. The tourism service providers group (mainly representing the private sector) reported found that going through so many separate public organisations for PA tourism services is inefficient and time consuming.

The Yala Wildlife Office (YWO), in its role as the key manager of the park, is the dominant stakeholder in Yala PA tourism. The YWO faces political interference, from both regional- and national-level politicians. For example, politicians forced the cancellation of the YWO's jeep registration programme. Yet, the YWO tries its best to advance PA tourism and conservation in Yala. The research has identified three critical issues relating to management of the park that are having a negative impact on Yala PA tourism: (1) the number of trackers is insufficient to meet the demand of the high daily volume of tourists entering the park; (2) the facilities at the park are in poor condition (for example, a Yala wildlife officer mentioned that one of the two ticketing machines was broken, and no prompt action was taken to fix it); and 3) income from entry fees into the

park is sent to the central Government Treasury, and so is not directly available to be used for Yala PA tourism development.

This thesis has considered local employees of Yala PA tourism and the local community to be two separate stakeholder groups, because although there may be some members common to both groups, the function of each group is different. The local employees of the private-sector tourism service providers are mainly in low-paid jobs. They have gained skills like English language speaking, but their chances of advancing to managerial positions through professional training are limited due to their low education qualifications. The local community does not have a special role other than sharing the space with other stakeholders and being impacted by PA tourism. This phenomenon arises as a consequence of the community's limited connections with other stakeholders in Yala PA tourism. Furthermore, the current state of Yala PA tourism fails to incorporate the essence of local culture and village life.

### **8.1.2 Relationships between the stakeholder groups**

This thesis identified the key roles of PA tourism stakeholders and the relationships between them based on the flow of products and services, money and information (see Section 5.3). Table 8.2 shows the products and services relationships between the stakeholder groups. All these relationships shown between each pair of stakeholder groups in the second column are direct relationships. For example, the PA tourists are the key recipients of the products and services (the wildlife tour product, safety during the safari tour, and the infrastructural facilities inside the park) provided by the Yala park management. The local community occasionally interacts with tourism service providers by receiving charitable material donations. The local community is not a part of the product or experience of the PA tourists because, for example, local cultural experiences are not offered as part of the wildlife tour.

**Table 8.2 Product and services relationships between the stakeholder groups**

	<b>Stakeholders group</b>	<b>Products and services relationships</b>
1	Yala park management → tourists	Wildlife tour product, safety, and infrastructural facilities
2	Tourism service providers → tourists	Organise tours, supply food, accommodation, and transport (jeep) services
3	Local employees → tourists	Providing services like jeep drivers, trackers, housekeepers, etc
5	Yala park management → tourism service providers	Allow safari jeeps inside the park
6	Policymakers → Yala park management	Provides policies and laws guidance
7	Policymakers → tourism service providers	Registering services for tourism businesses

The financial relationships are widely spread between the stakeholder groups, including flows to the local community (see Table 8.3). All these links shown in the table are direct links between each pair of stakeholder groups. Most of the financial transactions within the context of PA tourism originate from the tourists themselves, as they are the ones who pay to partake in the experience Yala offers. YWO and local employees emerge as the primary beneficiaries of the financial relationships between the stakeholder groups, with both receiving financial links from three other stakeholder groups within the PA tourism domain. The local community remains isolated from direct financial relationship with the other stakeholder groups involved in PA tourism, with local community households only financially benefiting from Yala PA tourism if their household includes a family member (or members) working in PA tourism.

**Table 8.3 Financial relationships between the stakeholder groups**

<b>Stakeholders group</b>	<b>Financial l relationships</b>
Tourists → Yala park management	Tickets
Tourists → tourism service providers	Pay for food, accommodation, and transportation
Tourism service providers → Yala park management	Tickets
Tourists → local employees	Tips
Tourism service providers → local employees	Salaries
Yala park management → local employees	Salaries
Local employee → local community	Income
Tourism service providers → policymakers	Registration fee
Yala park management → Government Treasury	Tickets
Government → policymakers	Yala park management's expenses
Policymakers → Yala park management	Yala park management's expenses
Tourists → local community	Accommodation charges or payments for buying products

The information relationships are less between the various stakeholder groups (see Table 8.4). Analogous to other forms of relationships, Yala park management exhibits the highest number of information relationships (five), while the local employees, on the other hand, lack any information relationships. The lack of awareness of PA tourism in the local community is a barrier to community participation in the PA tourism process and conservation initiatives of the park. As a result of this lack of awareness of the local community, the outside elites gain more PA tourism benefits than the locals do (Bello et al., 2017).

**Table 8.4 Information relationships between the stakeholder groups**

<b>Stakeholders group</b>	<b>Information relationships</b>
Yala park management → policymakers	Tourist arrivals and income information
Policymakers → Yala park management	Policies and laws
Tourism service providers → Yala park management	Opinions, suggestions, and requests in writing
Yala park management → tourists	General tourism information via the website and environment protection information for Yatra pilgrims
Yala park management → local community (Sunday School children)	Wildlife and conservation information

Yala park management plays a dominant role by linking all the stakeholder groups under the umbrella of Yala PA tourism, while the local community in the Ranakeliya village is the marginalised group from the network with limited connections. This thesis emphasises the need for more direct connections to be established between private tourism service providers and tourists and the local community to reduce external leakages of the benefits that PA tourism can bring (Heslinga et al., 2019; Snyman, 2019).

### **8.1.3 Utilising community capital**

The second research question asked: “How does the community utilise CCs to develop PA tourism?” The research found that while locals are compromised in utilising their capitals for PA tourism due to their lack of skills and confidence, outsider stakeholders have more confidence to consume Ranakeliya’s community capitals – often without asking the locals’ permission or through legal channels. However, there were a few examples of positive social impacts of PA tourism for local community members working in PA tourism businesses. For example, employees are able to access education opportunities through the links they build by networking with outside tourism service providers.

### **8.1.4 Accessing community capital**

The third research question asked: “How do various stakeholders access community capital to enable PA tourism?” According to the community capital framework (CCF) (Emery & Flora, 2006), even though the outside stakeholders do not directly link with the local community, they can still access and use all seven forms of community capital (CC)

in Ranakeliya for PA tourism in Yala. This research has revealed that human and natural resources are the two community capitals most heavily used by stakeholder groups for PA tourism development. Financial, physical, and social capitals are moderately used, while political and cultural capital usage is rare. The stakeholders gain access to Ranakeliya's CC either directly or indirectly, and some of them illicitly exploit local resources by leveraging their political influence.

#### **8.1.5 Power dynamics between the stakeholder groups**

The research also sought to answer: "How does power circulate among stakeholders when handling community capital and sharing the revenue generated from tourism?" In the case study of Yala, the power positions between the different stakeholder groups are dynamic and vary depending on each group's role in relation to PA tourism. Power circulates between the stakeholders as Ranakeliya's community capitals are consumed. Each stakeholder's share of the revenue generated through PA tourism varies according to the stakeholder's occupation, designation, wealth and whether they have any governmental or political links. In terms of resource consumption in Ranakeliya and benefit sharing in PA tourism, there is a clear gap between the local community and the outside tourism service providers (i.e., the private sector). The research has identified political interference and corruption as fundamental power-related issues in PA tourism, which marginalise the local community from the benefit-sharing process of Yala PA tourism (Buzinde et al., 2014; Koot et al., 2019).

### **8.2 PA tourism impacts on the local community in Ranakeliya**

The second research aim is to understand the community-level impacts of PA tourism using a case study approach. Key findings indicate that the local community's perceptions of how PA tourism affects their quality of life influences their willingness to participate in conservation of Yala. There were four specific research questions related to this aim, each of which will be discussed in the following subsections.

#### **8.2.1 Conflicts**

The research first needed to identify: "What sort of conflicts occur between Yala and the local community?" A number of incidents of conflict were identified between PA tourism stakeholder groups (see Table 8.5). Conflicts between Yala park management and the local community arose out of conflicts between wild elephants and chena farmers, park rangers and poachers, and park rangers and marijuana cultivators. Conflicts between wild



elephants and chena farmers is Yala's current key conservation issue, and the DWC is actively seeking solutions. Conflicts between park rangers and poachers and between park ranges and marijuana cultivators inside Yala, meanwhile, were found to be decreasing. This is mostly attributed to the employment of local community members as trackers or

**Table 8.5 Conflicts between PA tourism stakeholders**

Stakeholder group	Yala park management	Policymakers	Tourism service providers	Local Employees	Local community	Tourists	Stakeholders	The reason for the conflict
<b>Yala park management</b>			X	X	X		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poachers--rangers</li> <li>• Marijuana cultivators--rangers</li> <li>• YPM--transport service providers</li> <li>• YPM--jeep drivers</li> <li>• YPM--local community</li> </ul>	Limiting jeep numbers Speed driving/Trafficking for wildlife sighting Encroaching on land for chena cultivation
<b>Policymakers</b>							•	
<b>Tourism service providers</b>	X		X	X	X		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jeep owners--jeep drivers</li> <li>• Local--outside campsite service providers</li> <li>• Hoteliers--jeep drivers</li> </ul>	Increase salaries  Hotels started a jeep service
<b>Local employees</b>	X		X				•	
<b>Local community</b>	X		X			X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local community--outside Accommodation owners</li> <li>• Local community--outside accommodation owners</li> <li>• Chena farmers--elephant</li> </ul>	Encroaching on locals' lands  Against building hotels in Yala
<b>Tourists</b>					X		• Tourists--local community	Small material lost

rangers and the establishment of the YWC. However, PA tourism could be a vehicle to generate an excellent income for the local community while also addressing these major conservation issues in Yala. When the local community recognises the benefits of engaging in PA tourism, such as enhanced livelihoods, employment opportunities and increased revenue for their households, this could be a key motivation for them to participate in conservation activities.

The private-sector tourism service providers recorded the highest number of conflicts with other stakeholders; specifically, conflicts with Yala park management, other tourism service providers, employees and with the local community (see Table 8.5). Policymakers and tourists described only minor conflicts with other stakeholders. Most stakeholder conflicts are related to the illegal consumption of forest resources or inequitable sharing of the benefits from Yala PA tourism; for example, outsiders seizing local resources or opportunities for Yala PA tourism. Human–elephant conflict, waste management and environmental issues arising from the safari jeep tours (e.g., noise pollution and traffic) are the most crucial conservation issues in Yala, and they challenge the sustainability of PA tourism. These challenges need to be resolved through a careful investigation of individual concerns from the perspective of policymakers, followed by the implementation of well-suited plans and strategies. A comprehensive dissemination of awareness regarding these issues across all the stakeholder groups is critical to ensure all the groups support the plans and strategies and to foster their commitment to responsible tourism practices.

### **8.2.2 Economic and sociocultural impacts of PA tourism on the local community**

I wanted to find out how the local community perceive the economic and sociocultural impacts of PA tourism on their lives. This research discovered a number of examples of direct income and benefits earned by local employees engaged in PA tourism jobs. Table 8.6 shows how the positive impacts of Yala PA tourism on the Ranakeliya community align with or address sustainable tourism principles and concepts. The economic benefits of PA tourism are highlighted in the Ranakeliya case study in terms of generating jobs and uplifting the household economy. The economic benefits are not only limited to the household and community levels, but also influence urban development in the Thissamaharama town area.

**Table 8.6 Economic impacts of PA tourism on community development in Ranakeliya**

Evidence from the case study	Sustainability concept reflected
Generate jobs	SDG 8 – Decent work & economic growth Principle 2 – Cultivate the workforce
Develop household economy	
Permanent household income	
Uplift low-income earners' lives	SDG 1 – No poverty SDG 2 – Zero hunger SDG 3 – Good health & Well-being
Self-employment	SDG11 – Sustainable cities and communities
Small-scale market	Principle 3 – Prioritise communities SDG 10 – Reduced inequalities Principle 10 – Embed resilience
Selling agricultural products	
Formed a solid customer base	
Purchase new appliances	Topic 7- Strengthening prosperity in the local community
Renovate houses	
Buy vehicles	

*Notes:* SDGs – Tourism for Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2023).  
Principles – Ten principles for sustainable destinations (World Economic Forum, 2022).  
Topics – Key topics of the *European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas* (EUROPARC Federation, 2015).

Members of the community perceive that PA tourism has brought diverse economic benefits to their lives. Yala PA tourism has created a small percentage of local entrepreneurs, including females, and some housewives have become the breadwinners of their families. One advantage of PA tourism is that it allows local chena farmers to directly sell their agricultural products to the tourists visiting Yala, eliminating the need for intermediaries. This disintermediating effect of PA tourism offers beneficial prospects for local food producers and farmers, enabling them to gain greater control over their market interactions and potentially enhance their economic prospects. The enhancement of economic stability has led to improved living standards characterised by increased material development, such as house renovations and the acquisition of household appliances. This economic progress within the local community contributes to several SDGs, including SDG 1 – No poverty and SDG 8 – Decent work & economic

growth, while also aligning with sustainability principles by elevating the overall quality of life and well-being of the local residents.

Yala PA tourism has delivered positive sociocultural benefits to the local community, as shown in Table 8.7. Engagement between local residents and external stakeholders has notably contributed to social development in the community. Benefits of PA tourism for the community include advancements in children’s education, young people learning foreign languages, and the creation of equal opportunities for women. There have also been some negative repercussions of PA tourism in Yala, such as drug trafficking and addiction, but these are regarded by the locals as relatively minor-scale issues.

**Table 8.7 Sociocultural impacts of PA tourism on community development in Ranakeliya**

Evidence from the case	Sustainability concept reflected
Children’s education	SDG 4 – Quality education
Learn foreign languages	Topic 5 – Effectively communicating the area to visitors
Social networking	Topic 6 – Ensuring social cohesion
Women empowered	SDG 5 – Gender equality
Imitating foreign styles is limited	Principle 4 – Align visitors

*Notes:* SDGs – Tourism for Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2023).  
Principles – Ten principles for sustainable destinations (World Economic Forum, 2022.)  
Topics – Key topics of the *European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas* (EUROPARC Federation, 2015).

### 8.2.3 Environmental impacts of PA tourism on the local community

The research also sought to find how the environmental impacts of PA tourism are identified and felt by the community. The research found that the environmental benefits of PA tourism outweigh its drawbacks, not only to the Ranakeliya community but also to the Yala PA and the wildlife (Table 8.8). The key negative environmental consequence of PA tourism inside the park is the air and noise pollution caused by the large numbers of safari vehicles, which also disturb the wildlife. The wildlife, natural environment, and local community also all suffer from the mismanagement of solid waste generated by the Yala PA tourism businesses and the Yatra pilgrims. The positive environmental impacts of PA tourism in Yala highlighted through the community household survey focus on the community support in supplying water to the wildlife in the park during the dry months,

attempts to stop the deforestation in Yala, and the decrease in logging and poaching. The environmental benefits of PA tourism for the local community encourage the protection of nature and heritage inside the NP while establishing responsible tourism in Yala.

**Table 8.8 Environmental impacts of PA tourism on community development in Ranakeliya**

Evidence from the case	Sustainability concept reflected
Supply water to the wildlife during the drought	SDG 13 – Climate action Principle 7 – Produce and consume responsibly Topic 2 – Supporting conservation through tourism
Community against the construction in the forest/ deforestation	SDG 15 – Life on Earth Topic 1 – Protecting valuable landscapes, biodiversity and cultural heritage
Reduce poaching and logging	SDG 12 – Responsible consumption & production Principle 6 – Protect nature

*Notes:* SDGs – Tourism for Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2023).  
Principles – Ten principles for sustainable destinations (World Economic Forum, 2022.)  
Topics – Key topics of the *European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas* (EUROPARC Federation, 2015).

#### **8.2.4 Community awareness of and willingness to participate in PA conservation goals**

The feedback received in Ranakeliya through the household survey shows that the community's willingness to engage with conservation is very strong. Even though they were not aware of the YWO's conservation goals for the park, local community members are aware of the laws and regulations in Yala. The local community and the management officers in Yala believed that there had been a considerable decline in illegal activities in the park after PA tourism opened up a wide range of earning opportunities in the area. The local employees in PA tourism fully understood the value of protecting Yala and wildlife to protect their livelihoods; for example, the Yala Jeep Society and local drivers supply water to wildlife in Yala during the drought period.

The Ranakeliya community is willing to contribute to conservation activities to protect Yala by contributing labour and knowledge during their spare time. To a lesser extent, some are also willing to contribute financially. The local community are the most

experienced stakeholders who can explain the conservation issues in and around Yala, including the problems related to PA tourism in this area. They are still aware of – and some are still practising – some traditional methods of conservation in paddy cultivation in the Thissamaharama area, like the *kurulu paluva* or bird sacrificer (see Section 7.2.4). The community also suggested practical solutions to address these conservation issues such as slider banks to prevent wild elephants from roaming into villages. The research findings revealed that educating the younger generation about the ecological value of Yala and wildlife is well-received and has the potential to ensure the park's sustainability.

#### **8.2.5 Four key assertions for enhancing community development through PA tourism management**

This doctoral study centres on the management of PA tourism to foster sustainable community development and enhance the community's motivation to support conservation efforts in the specific context of a PA. The focus of community development in PA tourism literature has mainly revolved around African nations, overlooking South Asian contexts, especially community development and PA tourism in Sri Lanka. The limited PA tourism literature on Sri Lanka primarily addresses managerial issues and visitor perspectives while significantly lacking evidence-based research on community perceptions of the impacts of PA tourism.

My doctoral thesis contends that leveraging current opportunities to bring sustainable benefits to the local community is possible by effectively managing PA tourism. For example, creating avenues to promote local culture, employment and entrepreneurial ventures connected to PA tourism can boost the community's support and active participation in achieving the park's conservation objectives. There are four assertions that summarise this thesis:

1. *Empowering the voice of local residents recognises community as a crucial stakeholder in PA tourism; one that needs to be actively involved in decision making.* By leveraging their local and traditional knowledge, the local community can accurately define PA tourism impacts, propose location-specific solutions, and embody sustainability pillars encompassing economic, sociocultural, and environmental aspects with spatial dimensions to address immediate issues. Policymakers can benefit from this input in crafting site-specific plans and strategies to effectively mitigate the negative impacts and associated challenges of PA tourism.

2. *Identifying the missing links and establishing connections between key stakeholder groups, especially with the local community, will address the current problem of community marginalisation.* This requires a conceptual shift of PA tourism, viewing it not only as a focus on natural elements but also as a broader experience encompassing cultural elements and local interactions in the PA destination. Implementing career paths, livelihood modifications, and educational initiatives are vital for enhancing the capacity of community members to link with the PA tourism sector.
3. *Ensuring inclusivity in the PA tourism workforce offers opportunities for all community members equally and not just for adult men.* Embracing the leadership skills of local women, involving children to help influence environmental attitudes, and leveraging the wisdom of elderly community members in traditional conservation methods can lead to more effective and sustainable PA tourism development. Recognising their skills and assigning specific roles to each member fosters a sense of empowerment in local resource management and conservation efforts.
4. *Aligning the management of PA tourism to ancient wisdom found in the traditional Sri Lankan sustainability model will prioritise preservation of the natural environment.* The natural environment is not a mere ‘resource’ or commodity to be exploited for economic gain. To advance the notion of sustainability and fulfil the United Nations’ SDGs in this context, it is essential to move towards a non-western perspective of sustainability that views the human–nature relationship as mutually beneficial, deeply interconnected, and interdependent, and one based on reciprocity (Mazzocchi, 2020). This PhD study has provided evidence of the way local people achieve their subsistence and self-sufficiency from the natural environment, at the same time holding immense capacity to contribute to its safeguarding. Reorientating efforts to manage PA tourism through a traditional (or indigenous) interpretation of sustainability, holds potential to achieve not only the viability of the industry but also strengthen community development and conservation efforts simultaneously. This, in turn, will improve the quality of life and well-being of local community members, ensuring social sustainability. In a South Asian context, like Sri Lanka, cultural values of solidarity, trust, and social relationships play a vital role in establishing new opportunities for the local community to engage with PA tourism. Combining traditional conservation



methods with appropriate modern techniques effectively addresses conservation threats and enhances environmental sustainability beyond the park's boundaries. The level of sustainability achieved in managing PA tourism is evident in its community impacts, which can be measured using site-specific indicators to assess the success of community development efforts.

### **8.3 Theoretical and methodological contributions to knowledge**

This section outlines the thesis's theoretical and methodological contributions to the current literature on PA tourism, sustainable community development and conservation. There were three specific research questions related to this aim, each of which will be discussed in the following subsections.

#### **8.3.1 Theoretical contributions**

This doctoral research contributes to the advancement of the body of knowledge in sustainable community development, particularly in the context of managing PA tourism. The thesis has achieved this by presenting empirical evidence as a foundation to enrich the theories employed throughout the research: the community capital framework (CCF), stakeholder theory and political ecology approach. The thesis addresses how the local community views the impacts of PA tourism. The theoretical contribution lies in integrating the CCF, stakeholder theory and the political ecology approach into the academic discourse on the links between PA tourism, community development and conservation. By doing so, this thesis has identified some mutually beneficial approaches to managing PA tourism to foster community well-being and conservation.

This research has advanced the understanding of the CCF, first introduced by Emery and Flora in 2006, by adding stakeholders' access and consumption of community capital in the PA tourism context. The thesis also provided insight into the demand for local resources in Ranakeliya for Yala PA tourism by analysing CC usage by local employees and outside stakeholders. The thesis then investigated who benefits – and who does not – from Yala PA tourism by showing which stakeholder groups are the winners – outside private-sector stakeholders, local PA tourism business owners and local community employees – and which are the losers – predominantly the local community. CC analyses are still relatively recent and rare in PA tourism research, and this study adopted the CCF to represent various uses of Ranakeliya resources for facilitating PA tourism in Yala. Despite their CC being used for PA tourism in Yala, the negative impacts of PA tourism

on the local community of Ranakeliya are more than the positive benefits the community receives. Thus, the case study presented in this thesis offers contextualised insights into the complexities surrounding local resource consumption for PA tourism in developing countries, and so makes a significant contribution to the extant literature on PA tourism.

This study employed stakeholder theory to analyse how the different stakeholder groups in Yala PA tourism use, change and modify the CCs of the local Ranakeliya community, within their financial and technological capacities (Stone & Nyaupane, 2016). The patterns of stakeholder relationships, interactions and engagement with CCs are presented in the context of Yala PA tourism by providing examples using the three aspects of stakeholder theory: descriptive, instrumental and normative (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). Applying stakeholder theory in this research has enabled a clear understanding of the role of each of the stakeholder groups and delivered insights into how collaboration between the stakeholder groups might help in the development of Yala PA tourism. The research has also identified that the relationships and links between the key stakeholder groups are based on the flow of product and services, money, and information between the groups (see Section 5.3).

The review of past political ecology studies shows that relatively few studies have applied this approach in the tourism field, even though several researchers have addressed questions about political ecology (Katju & Kyle, 2021; Sultana, 2021). Applying the political ecology approach in PA tourism-related studies is particularly rare (Koot & Hitchcock, 2019). The research presented in this thesis also fills the knowledge gap through its comprehensive study of PA tourism stakeholders, their interactions with CCs, and its analysis of the relative power relations and dynamics between the key stakeholder groups in Yala PA tourism (Shoeb-Ur-Rahman et al., 2020; Stone & Nyaupane, 2018).

This research makes a distinctive contribution to the literature on PA tourism by analysing stakeholders' power dynamics and roles in the distribution of tourism benefits in Yala. Understanding these power dynamics is crucial as an understanding can inform more equitable and sustainable tourism practices, leading to enhanced community development and conservation outcomes. The research findings led to the recommendation that policymakers and practitioners in PA tourism prioritise inclusive and participatory decision-making processes by involving all stakeholder groups, including the local community. Maintaining transparency and accountability in benefit-sharing mechanisms

is essential to ensure fair distribution of benefits for the well-being of both the local community and for conservation initiatives.

There is a vital need to better understand PA tourism and its impacts from the local community's point of view, with more destination-based examples of the practice, especially from developing countries. This study facilitates a more profound and richer analysis of PA tourism impacts on the local community, which is the dimension largely missing in Sri Lankan PA tourism literature (Duminduhewa et al., 2020; Hettiarachchi, n.d.).

Recently, there has been a growing emphasis on PA conservation globally, drawing the attention of both practitioners and academics. This research makes a noteworthy theoretical contribution to the literature by examining a local community's intention towards PA conservation from the specific perspective of Sri Lanka, with a focus on Yala. The study has achieved this by elucidating both traditional and contemporary local knowledge of conservation, which has been revealed through the active participation of community members in this research. This research also addressed the relative paucity of studies on women's leadership in conservation within the context of Sri Lankan PA tourism.

### **8.3.2 Methodological contributions**

The thesis's methodological contributions to tourism studies literature are many and varied. The research adopted a case study approach and applied qualitative and quantitative methods. The study design comprised two data-collection phases, which improved the understanding of the case study. The community household survey followed the semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders. The survey results then informed the mapping exercises, and provided an excellent way of recruiting participants for community mapping of resources, areas of conflicts and relationships.

This thesis employed an alternative to the traditional snowball sampling method to identify the participants for the mapping exercises. To avoid biases embedded with the snowball sampling method, the community members for the mapping exercises were selected through a community survey, which allowed every community respondent to have an equal chance to also be a mapping exercises participant. Through the community survey, I identified suitable participants for the mapping exercises based on their

knowledge of PA tourism. This alternative sampling method contributes to the methodology of community-based PA tourism research.

The major methodological contribution of this research, however, lies in its combination of the participatory approach (PA) with Geographical Information Systems (GIS). Employment of this data-collection method addresses a gap in literature due to the limited number of mixed methods research studies that have used PAGIS in a PA tourism context. According to my knowledge, this doctoral research is the first to use the PAGIS method as a data-collection tool for Sri Lankan PA tourism research.

The benefit of this approach is that PAGIS provides an opportunity for local residents to express opinions. Thus, PAGIS is a bottom-up approach to data collection and can be used to reveal issues from a community perspective. Local community members from Ranakeliya identified the PA tourism business locations and where the conservation-related issues occurred through the participatory mapping exercises used to collect the spatial data. The mapping exercises were followed by a discussion (qualitative approach) to dig for further information about the spatial data.

### **8.3.3 Future sustainability indicators**

The third aim of the research was to make significant theoretical and methodological contributions to the current literature. In particular, I wanted to suggest some future sustainability indicators that might strengthen understanding of tourism impacts and performance in areas where conservation and community development initiatives intersect. It is vital to determine the success factors of sustainable community development through better PA tourism management in Yala. The doctoral study has uncovered specific areas that may inform the future development of indicators to evaluate the level of sustainable community development achieved through Yala PA tourism. These areas were identified through the findings of how the local community of Ranakeliya perceives the impacts of PA tourism on their lives. It is essential to emphasise that the study primarily focuses on the fundamental domains where sustainability indicators could potentially be developed. The identification of success factors across the three dimensions of sustainability – economic, sociocultural, and environmental – will provide valuable insights into the extent to which Yala PA tourism genuinely benefits the local community and contributes to conservation efforts.

The key areas that may inform the future development of sustainability indicators are specifically identified to measure the community impacts of Yala PA tourism. The three dimensions of sustainability – economic, sociocultural, and environmental – address the three central pillars of the sustainable development concept. The impacts of Yala PA tourism on the local community that were identified in the research were categorised into various themes to produce key variables for each dimension of sustainable development. Table 8.9, Table 8.10 and Table 8.11 present success factors for the economic, sociocultural, and environmental dimensions of sustainability, respectively. The variables in each table are ordered from negative to positive impacts on the local community. The areas identified for informing future development of sustainability indicators to evaluate the level of sustainable community development achieved through Yala PA tourism potentially address 11 of the United Nations’ 17 SDGs.

The economic dimension could comprise five variables, as shown in Table 8:9. Most of these economic variables indicate the economic growth the local community has achieved through engaging in PA tourism economic activities; for example, the number of local entrepreneurs, accommodation providers, and jobs in PA tourism have increased.

Most of the economic dimension variables show Yala PA tourism’s financial capacity to contribute to local community development. This study has investigated the portion of the financial returns from PA tourism that goes to Ranakeliya and assessed whether the economic leakages out of the area surpasses the financial benefits accrued to the local community. The research has underscored the significance of incorporating spatial variables to measure progress in the economic sustainability dimension. For instance, analysing the expansion of the spatial distribution of local PA tourism enterprises can offer insights into local economic advancements in an area. These economic variables are address four of the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals: SDG 1 – No poverty, SDG 2 – Zero hunger, SDG 8 – Decent work & economic growth, and SDG 11 – Sustainable cities and communities (see Table 8.6).

**Table 8.9 The success factors of community development through Yala PA  
tourism: the economic dimension**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Success factors: economic dimension</b>
Illegal economic activities and economic disadvantages of PA tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reducing illegal economic activities (e.g, marijuana cultivation and poaching).</li> <li>• Increasing the land value of the Thissamaharama area.</li> <li>• Increasing the prices of services and products.</li> <li>• Reducing the outer leakages of PA tourism.</li> </ul>
PA tourism business in the Thissamaharama area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing the number of local entrepreneurs.</li> <li>• Increasing the number of homestays, hotels, campsites, and other types of accommodations owned by locals.</li> </ul>
Local employment in PA tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing the number of local community members transitioning from traditional livelihoods to jobs in PA tourism (e.g., from chena farming to safari jeep driving).</li> <li>• Increasing the direct and indirect employment opportunities.</li> <li>• Reducing the unemployment rate, due to PA tourism.</li> </ul>
Household assets of community members employed in PA tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving the standard of the houses (e.g., roof, floor, number of rooms per member, toilet, and availability of safe water and electricity).</li> <li>• Increasing the number of newly built houses.</li> <li>• Increasing the number of new home appliances purchased.</li> <li>• Increasing the number of vehicles owned.</li> </ul>
Use of economic spaces for local PA tourism economic activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing the spatial distribution of the locally owned tourism businesses.</li> </ul>

The sociocultural dimension comprises five variables, as shown in Table 8.10. Most sociocultural success factors are clustered around the education, health, and well-being variable. This dimension also emphasises the need for a local cultural experience in PA tourism to balance and enhance the sociocultural aspect of sustainability, which will strengthen community participation and see a greater flow of benefits to local people.

**Table 8.10 The success factors of community development through Yala PA tourism: the sociocultural dimension**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Success factors: Sociocultural dimension</b>
Local village life, cultural and heritage experiences offered in PA tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reducing the negative social impacts (e.g., number of school children addicted to drugs).</li> <li>• Increasing the number of festivals and events available for PA tourists to attend.</li> <li>• Increasing the number of PA tourist visits to heritage and religious places around Yala.</li> <li>• Increasing the number of cultural elements available to tourists to experience (e.g., traditional customs, local food, games, stories, legends, poems, music and dancing, and costumes)</li> <li>• Increasing the production of local crafts so that tourists can buy or have hands-on experience.</li> </ul>
Social equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing employment opportunities for women.</li> <li>• Increasing the number of women entrepreneurs in the area.</li> <li>• Reducing the incidence of political interference in Yala PA tourism.</li> </ul>
Education, health and well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing the number of charities conducted by PA tourism businesses for local people.</li> <li>• Increasing the number of PA tourism businesses supporting village children's education.</li> <li>• Increasing the number of donations made to hospitals in the area by PA businesses.</li> <li>• Increasing the ability of the local community to buy nutritional food for their families.</li> <li>• Increasing the ability of the local community to buy medication.</li> <li>• Increasing accessibility to clean and safe drinking water.</li> </ul>
Skill development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing the number of languages wildlife trackers can speak.</li> <li>• Improving the community members' English language skills through working in PA tourism.</li> <li>• Increasing the number of community members who have developed other professional skills (e.g., driving, cooking foreign cuisines).</li> </ul>
Use of social and cultural spaces for PA tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing the number of locations where tourists can interact with locals to experience local culture and heritage.</li> </ul>

Promoting participation, collaboration, social equity, and capacity building within the local community are pivotal strategies that hold promise in meeting the demand for PA tourism jobs. These strategies aim to enhance the social and cultural capital in the Ranakeliya community. This research indicates the applicability of spatial variables to measure the sustainability progress of the sociocultural dimension; for example, by identifying socially and culturally valuable spaces for PA tourism. These sociocultural

indicators of Yala PA tourism address five of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals: SDG 3- Good health & Well-being; SDG 4 – Quality education; SDG 5 – Gender equality; SDG 10 – Reduced inequalities; and SDG 16 – Peace, justice, and strong institutions.

The environmental dimension comprises six variables, as shown in Table 8.11. The most environmental success factors are under the environmental pollution variable and relate to pressures on the natural resources due to the Yala PA tourism development that were identified during the course of this research. The environmental education and conservation initiatives variables emphasise the quality of the natural environment and ecosystem – key variables to strengthen the sustainability pillar of the environment.

The spatial variable for the environmental dimension highlights that environmental success factors should focus on ecologically concerned locations relevant to environmental pollution and conservation. These environmental indicators of Yala PA tourism address three of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals: SDG 12 – Responsible consumption and production, SDG 13 – Climate action, and SDG 15 – Life on earth (see Table 8.8).



**Table 8.11 The success factors of community development through Yala PA tourism: the environmental dimension**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Success factors: the environmental dimension</b>
Environmental pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Air – reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from safari jeeps inside the park.</li> <li>• Water – increasing the quality of groundwater.</li> <li>• Soil – reducing the amount of soil dug for construction purposes.</li> <li>• Noise – reducing the noise from safari jeeps inside the park.</li> <li>• Visual – reducing the high numbers of safari jeeps inside the park.</li> <li>• Land – reducing solid waste disposal within the Yala boundary.</li> </ul>
Disturbing wildlife	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reducing the number of incidents of poaching.</li> <li>• Reducing construction inside the PA.</li> <li>• Reducing the number of human–wildlife conflicts (e.g., human–elephant).</li> </ul>
Pressure on the natural resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reducing water consumption for PA tourism-related businesses.</li> <li>• Meeting the demand for pipe water supply.</li> <li>• Reducing the collection of forest items.</li> <li>• PA tourism activities meeting the natural carrying capacity of the Yala PA.</li> <li>• Reducing illegal logging and deforestation (e.g., clearing forests for chena cultivation).</li> </ul>
Environmental education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving the knowledge and experience of wildlife trackers.</li> <li>• Improving the quality of interpretation that tourists receive.</li> <li>• Ongoing community awareness programmes about wildlife conservation.</li> </ul>
Conservation initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing the number of community-based conservation activities.</li> <li>• Increasing the communities' willingness to participate in conservation initiatives.</li> </ul>
Ecologically sensitive locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reducing the number of locations where environmental pollution and conservation issues are being reported.</li> <li>• Reducing illegal activities around Yala (e.g., logging and poaching).</li> <li>• Increasing the number of locations where conservation activities take place (e.g., cleaning programmes).</li> </ul>

## **8.4 Practical implications for Ranakeliya and beyond**

The research findings will assist key stakeholders such as PA tourism practitioners, local authorities, policymakers (e.g., the DWC and SLTDA in Sri Lanka, and equivalent

organisations in other South Asian countries), and the proximate communities of PAs with practical guidance in developing evidence-based tourism approaches and strategies. This is particularly important at the present time as the number of visitors to Sri Lanka is increasing again since the borders have reopened following the COVID-19 pandemic. By the end of 2022, the number of international tourists visiting Sri Lanka had reached 719,978, whereas by the end of May 2023, a total of 524,486 tourists had arrived (SLTDA, 2023). The case-based approach of this research suggests several practical implications that directly apply in relation to Yala PA tourism. These address the three scales of the case study: at the community level – Ranakeliya; at the regional level – Thissamaharama DSD, and at the PA level –Yala, in the context of PA tourism in Sri Lanka.

#### **8.4.1 Community level – Ranakeliya**

Analysis of the financial impacts of PA tourism on the Ranakeliya community revealed that fewer than 10 small-scale individual entrepreneurs have established businesses since 2009. The number of ‘outsider’ entrepreneurs active in Yala PA tourism significantly outweighs the number of local entrepreneurs. To address this, a mechanism could be established to share the experiences of existing local PA tourism entrepreneurs with those from the wider community who wish to engage in PA tourism businesses in the future. Lessons learnt from the current local entrepreneurs would be an inspiration and successful entrepreneurs could provide moral support to guide the new entrepreneurs and build their capacity.

Establishing a mechanism to share the experience of the local employees who currently work in PA tourism with employees who work in non-PA tourism-related businesses or with unemployed people in the community would help encourage those who think that their skills are not enough to obtain a job in PA tourism. In order to facilitate the exchange of such experiences, it is vital to enhance social capital by establishing networks between the local community and individuals presently engaged in PA tourism, whether they reside within or outside the community. The local employees can share their stories about achieving financial autonomy through employment within PA tourism, alongside the significant advantages their job has yielded for their families. For example, Rani could recount how the interpersonal connections she forged with external stakeholders have broadened her perspective of the world beyond the community, and subsequently positively influenced her daughter’s educational pursuits (see Section 6.2.1).

Another way local community members could generate income through Yala PA tourism is by producing local handicrafts to sell to tourists as souvenirs. The products could be sold in the YWO's souvenir shop at the park entrance at Palatupana, without the need for an intermediary. Even if the souvenir shop were to take some sort of cut (e.g., a small commission or on-selling fee) to cover its own costs, nearly 100% of the profits would still come directly back into the local community. Perhaps the souvenir shop would take some sort of cut (e.g., a small commission or on-selling fee) to cover its own costs. To establish this initiative, the YWC could provide support in the form of training, provision of raw materials, and by issuing quality assurance certificates. Through establishing networks and cultivating leadership within the community, local community members can garner essential support to acquire new knowledge and the skills necessary to connect with PA tourism. This process will contribute to the development of human capital in Ranakeliya and bolster the solidarity of social capital within the community. Such enhancements in social capital are pivotal for the achievement of sustainable community development in Ranakeliya. The skills and income gained through the new occupation of handicraft production could further uplift the self-confidence and well-being of the local community.

The existing forest conservation programme run by the YWC in Ranakeliya has no link with Yala PA tourism and only cultivates aloe vera to sell to a beverage company. If this programme could be expanded to provide local community members with the knowledge, skills and technology to produce aloe vera drink to sell to PA tourists in Yala, that would extend and connect the conservation programme into PA tourism.

During the course of my fieldwork in Ranakeliya, I noted the prominent presence of women in leadership roles in the local YWC. This aspect stands out as a key strength of the YWC, illuminating its significance in addressing the pressing needs of conservation efforts in Yala through the empowerment of women. From an environmental perspective, both the community and the government can actively contribute to curbing illegal economic activities, such as logging and poaching in Yala, by bolstering economic opportunities through YWC initiatives. By empowering local women, they, in turn, involve their children in conservation activities, effectively instilling a passion for conservation in the future generation and ensuring the sustainable preservation of natural resources.

From an educational perspective, it is imperative to disseminate knowledge about conservation throughout the wider communities neighbouring Yala. The education of all school children holds particular significance, as this research has highlighted the role of the younger generation as a beacon of hope for Yala. The fieldwork of Ranakeliya revealed that parents view their children as more adept environmental actors, instilling confidence in young people's capacity to ensure Yala's long-term sustainability.

#### **8.4.2 Regional level –Tissamaharama**

The findings of this research emphasise the lack of a common platform, such as a board that comprises representatives of all stakeholders in PA tourism, including the local community, to discuss the issues and make decisions and plans about PA tourism in Yala. This platform would help minimise conflicts and misunderstandings between different stakeholder groups through collaborative support. This approach will further encourage sustainable resource consumption as well as equal benefit sharing and power circulation between the stakeholders.

The high density of the leopard population is the key selling point of Yala. However, transport providers would be better equipped to offer a more enjoyable visitor experience if they understood the impact of high levels of traffic in the park from the tourists' perspective. The substantial influx of visitors for leopard watching adversely affects tourist satisfaction and diminishes the overall wildlife safari experience in Yala. Jeep owners continually buy safari jeeps, and young men from the local community think that being a safari jeep driver is the only way to engage in PA tourism. It would be advantageous if locals were encouraged to be creative and innovative in the way they engaged with PA tourism; for example, Markus quit farming and became the owner of a treehouse accommodation business (see Section 5.1.3 and Figures 5.3 and 5.4).

In terms of policy and regulations, there are several practical applications of the research findings. An appropriate policy proposal involves the establishment of regulations for private-sector tourism service providers, stipulating a predetermined target for the proportion of staff to be recruited from the local community, to increase local employment in PA tourism. Another area that needs urgent attention is waste management – the YWO and Thissamaharama Regional Council have to take action to manage the solid waste of PA tourism in Yala and Thissamaharama DSD. The SLTDA and the Hoteliers' Society in the Thissamaharama area also could develop best practice guidelines to help hotel and accommodation owners to sort their solid waste into compostable waste,

recyclable waste, or landfill. Furthermore, the Regional Council could be taking steps to restart the compost centre near the Kithalalanda rubbish dumping site, and it could also set up policies and procedures to recycle or upcycle non-compostable waste generated through PA tourism.

#### **8.4.3 PA level – Yala**

The research findings have identified the urgent need for conservation actors in Yala to be involved in the current environmental issues in PA tourism. The main issue the YWO needs to address and control is the number of safari jeeps entering the park. The immediate action that the park management could take is to remove the current two-sessions system and open the park from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., up to 600 jeeps per day. If not, keep the timing system and allow 300 jeeps each morning and evening. Either of these actions would help to reduce the long queues of jeeps at the entrance of the park every morning (see Figure 5.14). For a long-term solution, research could be carried out with the support of the scientific community and conservation actors to establish the carrying capacity of the park. The research would focus on the manageable number of jeeps in Yala at any one time to avoid environmental degradation, lessen noise and visual pollution, and to ensure excess traffic doesn't detract from the visitor experience.

The research findings underscore the significance of establishing a robust career trajectory for wildlife trackers within the DWC, elevating the prestige of their role. To achieve this, it is imperative to prioritise the training and continuous professional development of wildlife trackers, particularly in areas concerning Yala's ecosystems and biodiversity. Moreover, developing their language skills would augment the trackers effectiveness in communicating with visitors. The research has identified a huge shortfall between the number of wildlife trackers (60) and the number of safari jeeps in the park (up to 600 at any one time), so increasing the number of wildlife trackers in Yala is essential. This could be accomplished by providing enhanced opportunities for individuals from neighbouring communities, thereby fostering a sense of inclusion and connection between local communities and Yala. In turn, the park would benefit from their local knowledge about wildlife and traditional conservation methods.

The YWO could play a crucial role in educating tourists to refrain from tipping the wildlife trackers. Removing the gratuity incentive would potentially reduce competition between wildlife trackers and alleviate the congested traffic associated with leopard watching. However, tipping is a cultural norm in the Sri Lankan tourism and such a move

is likely to be highly unpopular with the wildlife trackers, because while the trackers work for daily allowances, their income is highly dependent on the tourists' tips. To address this drop in income, a viable solution would be to increase the Yala ticket price and incorporate a tipping amount into the cost of the ticket. By doing so, a greater portion of the generated profits could be allocated towards salary increases for the trackers. The distributed tipping amount, encompassed within the ticket price, could be evenly shared. Nonetheless, prior to implementing any plan to control tipping, it is imperative that park management conduct a thorough investigation into all the options and seek feedback from relevant stakeholders.

When increasing the ticket price, the DWC can decide to share some percentage of the ticket price with the community forest management project through the YWC. This step will directly link the local community and PA tourism to achieve the conservation goals in Yala while realising sustainable community development. However, it would be useful first to conduct research with visitors to the park around the price elasticity of tickets before increasing the ticket price and also to see if tourists would be willing to pay a conservation levy, as is done in other parts of Sri Lanka.

Another action the YWO could take to enhance local community development and promote linkages between the local community and the park to help it meet its conservation goals would be to allow the YWC to run the Yala canteen at the entrance to the park.

## **8.5 Limitations and future research directions**

This research examined the issues of Yala PA tourism and the challenges of sustainable community development in a rural Sri Lankan context. I have identified a few knowledge gaps in the case study, which could be addressed in future research.

This doctoral research has successfully identified particular domains in which indicators could be formulated to assess the extent of sustainable community development resulting from Yala PA tourism. These domains were elucidated through an in-depth exploration of how the local community of Ranakeliya perceives the impacts of PA tourism on their daily lives. It is important to note that the present study only highlights the foundational areas where sustainability indicators could potentially be established. Further investigations employing the participatory rural appraisal (PRA) approach are imperative at the community level, necessitating extensive engagement of local residents and other

stakeholders. These subsequent endeavours will facilitate the development of context-specific indicators that truly encapsulate the essence of sustainable community development as understood and experienced by this particular community.

I identified the participatory mapping exercises as an effective method to collect data about PA tourism and conservation from the local community. In this research, the mapping exercises were limited to the Ranakeliya case study community, but other villages share the Yala boundary. If this mapping exercises could cover all the villages along the Yala boundary, the data collected would be helpful for the YWO, DWC and other policymakers to address the issues related to PA tourism and conservation.

This research has revealed the presence of several historical and cultural treasures both within and outside the boundaries of Yala, such as the Uddagandara temple, Sithulpauwa and Kataragama. Given their significance, it is crucial to acknowledge and prioritise future investigations with the aim of establishing connections between these valuable heritage resources (e.g., the Yatra pilgrimage) and rural village life within the context of PA tourism, particularly under ecotourism concepts.

One of the research findings uncovered through the community survey was that there may be a causal link between the water shortage and PA tourism development in the case study area. The demand for drinking and tap water is rising, and so is the number of people with kidney disease, including school children. Future research is needed to investigate whether there is a relationship between the poor quality and limited supply of water available to the local community and the growing demand for water from the PA tourism sector in the Thissamaharama area.

This thesis has revealed a vivid picture of local community engagement in PA tourism and its impacts on the lives of people living near Yala. Data collection for this research was conducted during the traumatic period following the 2019 Easter terrorist attack. However, this research did not plan to explore the impacts of a terrorist attack on PA tourism and the locals' lives. How Yala PA tourism and the communities in neighbouring villages survived the fall-out from this attack and became resilient would be an interesting and worthwhile study. Such a study could be extended to explore other challenging times in recent Sri Lankan history, such as the global COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 to 2021 and the subsequent economic crisis in 2022, and how the tourism industry has recovered from these shocks, including from the sudden and dramatic drops in visitor numbers.

## **8.6 Final reflections**

This doctoral research investigated an important contemporary issue in tourism studies. Protected area tourism and the role and impacts of local communities associated with these areas has not been studied in the Sri Lankan context before. The opportunity to engage with local people whose lives and livelihoods are intimately connected with Yala Protected Area was a privilege. The sharing of their experiences, views and stories provides insights that help shape a better understanding of the intricacies and importance of their relationships with one another, with Yala PA and the many visitors who come into their lives.



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# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1: AUT Ethics Approval

### Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC)

Auckland University of Technology  
D-88, Private Bag 92006, Auckland 1142, NZ  
T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316

E: [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz)

[www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics](http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics)

18 July 2019

Simon Milne

Faculty of Culture and Society

Dear Simon

Re Ethics Application: **19/159 Managing protected area tourism for sustainable community development: the case of Ruhuna National Park (Yala), Sri Lanka**

Thank you for providing evidence as requested, which satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC).

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 18 July 2022.

#### Non-Standard Conditions of Approval

1. In the Information Sheet for the interviews with stakeholders please explain the role that the village officer has had in identifying potential participants.

Non-standard conditions must be completed before commencing your study. Non-standard conditions do not need to be submitted to or reviewed by AUTEC before commencing your study.

#### Standard Conditions of Approval

1. The research is to be undertaken in accordance with the **Auckland University of Technology Code of Conduct for Research** and as approved by AUTEC in this application.
2. A progress report is due annually on the anniversary of the approval date, using form EA2, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/researchethics>.
3. A final report is due at the expiration of the approval period, or, upon completion of project, using form EA3, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/researchethics>.
4. Any amendments to the project must be approved by AUTEC prior to being implemented. Amendments can be requested using the EA2 form: <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/researchethics>.
5. Any serious or unexpected adverse events must be reported to AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.
6. Any unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project should also be reported to the AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.

Please quote the application number and title on all future correspondence related to this project.

AUTEC grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval for access for your research from another institution or organisation, then you are responsible for obtaining it. If the research is undertaken outside New Zealand, you need to meet all locality legal and ethical obligations and requirements. You are reminded that it is your responsibility to ensure that the spelling and grammar of documents being provided to participants or external organisations is of a high standard.

For any enquiries, please contact [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz)

Yours sincerely,



Kate O'Connor  
Executive Manager  
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: [dinesha.senarathna@aut.ac.nz](mailto:dinesha.senarathna@aut.ac.nz); Carolyn Deuchar

## **Appendix 2: Information Sheet – Face-to-face questionnaire survey – Local community in Ranakeliya**

### **Project Information: Protected Area tourism and community development**

Dear Sir/Madam, My name is Dinesha Senarathna. I am a PhD student from New Zealand Tourism Research Institute (NZTRI), Faculty of Culture and Society, Auckland University of Technology (AUT), New Zealand. My supervisor is Professor Simon Milne, Director of the New Zealand Tourism Research Institute. I would be grateful if you could participate in my research on *Managing Protected Area (PA) Tourism and Community Development: the Case of Ruhuna National Park (Yala)*. This research aims to find out how national park focused tourism can be managed to generate sustainable community development and, in turn, influence the willingness of communities to embrace conservation efforts and support the parks' broader environmental and societal goals. This research will examine the links between tourism, PA, and sustainable community development by engaging with a range of key stakeholder groups. This research will provide information to improve the national park conservation policy and the development of PA-related sustainable community benefits in Sri Lanka and other developing countries.

This survey will ask you about various impacts of PA tourism in Yala on the local community and how it affects community development. There are no right or wrong answers here, I am just interested in gathering your opinions on PA tourism in Yala and the Ranakeliya community, and your answers will provide important information which will help in improving the community benefits associated with PA tourism activities. When you return your survey, it will be processed by me at NZTRI, AUT, New Zealand.

The survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes. You are giving your valuable time and information to help with this research and I can assure you that I have considered your well-being. The information you provide will be treated as confidential and will only be viewed by the researcher and her supervisors. The researcher is bound by her University ethics procedures and processes and will not pass on any information to others.

When the study is completed I will present my thesis findings to your community of Ranakeliya, most likely in the format of a simple presentation and workshop. General research findings will also be available from the website of our institute, [www.nztri.org](http://www.nztri.org). The results will also be used in journal and conference publications, for academic purposes only. All the answers are confidential and can in no way be linked to your personal details.

By completing this survey you are giving consent to be part of this research. All questions are optional, and you may choose not to answer some. Please remember that your participation in the survey is entirely voluntary, you may withdraw from the research at any point in this form. If you withdraw from the study, please know that all relevant information will be destroyed. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of data may not be possible. If you have any queries, or you are not clear about the meaning of any words used in the survey, please ask the survey administrator for clarification. I would like to express my profound thanks for your time and assistance.

#### **Researcher: Dinesha Senarathna**

**Contact:** New Zealand Tourism Research Institute,  
Faculty of Society and Culture,  
Auckland University of Technology,  
Private Bag 92006,  
Auckland 1020,  
New Zealand  
Tel: +64 921 9999 ext. 8890 or +94 71 2283806  
Email: [dsenarat@aut.ac.nz](mailto:dsenarat@aut.ac.nz)

#### **Project supervisor: Prof. Simon Milne,**

**Contact:** Director of New Zealand Tourism  
Research Institute,  
Faculty of Society and Culture,  
Auckland University of Technology,  
Private Bag 92006,  
Auckland 1020,  
New Zealand  
Tel: + 64 992 19245 ext. 9876  
Email [simon.milne@aut.ac.nz](mailto:simon.milne@aut.ac.nz)

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor. Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTEK, Kate O'Connor, [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz), +64 921 9999 ext 6038.

*Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 18/July/ 2019, AUTEK Reference number 19/159.*

### Appendix 3: Face-to-face questionnaire survey – Local community in Ranakeliya

*Project Title: Managing Protected Area (PA) Tourism for Sustainable Community Development: the Case of Ruhuna National Park (Yala), Sri Lanka.*

**Data collection phase II:** This research is designed to understand the community-level impacts of PA-based tourism.

Survey Purpose:

- To gather basic socioeconomic details from households in Ranakeliya GND and to learn more about people's interactions/ tensions with Yala and impacts associated with PA tourism.
- To select the population sample for later participatory mapping exercises/interviews.

House reference no.

#### Background Information

1. How long have you been a resident in Ranakeliya? ..... years
2. Were you born and raised in Ranakeliya? Yes ☐ No ☐
  - 2.1 If NO, why did you migrate to Ranakeliya?.....
3. How do you rate your current quality of life in Ranakeliya?
  - i) Extremely poor ☐
  - ii) Poor ☐
  - iii) Neutral ☐
  - iv) Good ☐
  - v) Extremely good ☐
4. What is your occupation?.....
  - 4.1 Do you work in a business that is involved with PA tourism in Yala? If YES,
    - 4.1.1 What kind of services does your organisation offer for PA tourism?.....
  - 4.2 Where is your working place?.....
5. How many members of your household are formally employed?.....
  - 5.1 What ..... is ..... their occupation/s?.....
  - 5.2 Do they work in a business that deal with PA tourism in Yala? If YES,
    - 5.2.1 If YES What kind of services do they offer for PA tourism?.....

#### Yala National Park and Ranakeliya Community

6. What does Yala National Park mean to you?.....
7. Is your daily life linked to Yala in some way? If YES, rank how it linked?
  - i) Hunting ☐
  - ii) Collecting fire wood ☐
  - iii) Collecting medicinal herbs ☐
  - iv) Collecting food items (Fruits, etc.) ☐
  - v) Slash & burn cultivation ☐
  - vi) PA tourism-related work ☐
  - vii Other PA related employment ☐
  - viii) Other, ..... please clarify.....
8. How would you describe the general relationship that exists between Yala and the Ranakeliya community?
  - i) Extremely weak ☐
  - ii) Weak ☐
  - iii) Neutral ☐
  - iv) Strong ☐
  - v) Extremely strong ☐
  - 8.1 Please mention the most significant reason to your answer?.....
9. Do you have any personal experience of, or knowledge of, tensions occurring between Ranakeliya community and Yala? if YES,
  - 9.1 Please mention the most significant reason behind that tensions.....

- 9.2 What solutions can you suggest for these tensions?.....
10. Have you seen any changes in tourism in Yala since the civil war ended? If YES,  
10.1 What is the most significant change have you witnessed?.....

#### Protected Area Tourism Impacts on Ranakeliya Community

Please respond to the following statements:

11. PA tourism in Yala is good for your community  
i) Very bad ☐ ii) Bad ☐ iii) Neutral ☐ iv) Good ☐ v) Very Good ☐  
11.1 Please mention the most significant reason to your answer?.....
12. Yala PA tourism positively affects the cultural dimensions on your community  
i) Strongly disagree ☐ ii) Disagree ☐ iii) Neutral ☐ iv) Agree ☐ v) Strongly agree ☐  
12.1 Please mention the most significant reason to your answer?.....
13. Yala PA tourism positively affects the economy of your community  
i) Strongly disagree ☐ ii) Disagree ☐ iii) Neutral ☐ iv) Agree ☐ v) Strongly agree ☐  
13.1 Please mention the most significant reason to your answer?.....
14. Yala PA tourism positively affects the environment in your community?  
i) Strongly disagree ☐ ii) Disagree ☐ iii) Neutral ☐ iv) Agree ☐ v) Strongly agree ☐  
14.1 Please mention the most significant reason to your answer?.....

#### Protected Area Tourism Impacts on Ranakeliya Households

Please respond to the following statements:

15. PA tourism in Yala is good for my household  
i) Very bad ☐ ii) Bad ☐ iii) Neutral ☐ iv) Good ☐ v) Very good ☐  
15.1 Please mention the most significant reason to your answer?.....
16. Yala PA tourism positively affects the economy of my household  
i) Strongly disagree ☐ ii) Disagree ☐ iii) Neutral ☐ iv) Agree ☐ v) Strongly agree ☐  
16.1 Please mention the most significant reason to your answer?.....

#### Conservation attitudes

17. Are you aware of the conservation goals of Yala National Park? If YES,  
17.1 What is the most significant conservation goals of Yala National Park as you know?.....
18. Does Yala PA tourism influence your attitudes towards conservation? If YES,  
18.1 Give an example, how does it influence?.....
19. Are you willing to contribute towards achieving the conservation goals of Yala National Park? If YES,  
19.1 Please mention the most appropriate way you willing to contribute towards achieving them?.....  
If NOT,  
19.2 Why aren't you willing to contribute towards achieving them?.....

#### Basic Socioeconomic information (For statistical purposes only)

20. What is your gender: Male ☐ Female ☐
21. What is your age: 18 – 30 ☐ 31 – 45 ☐ 46 – 55 ☐ 56 – 65 ☐ 66 or older ☐
22. What is the highest level of education you have completed?  
i) Primary ☐  
ii) Intermediate school ☐  
iii) High school ☐  
iv) Technical college ☐

v) Bachelor's degree ☐

vii) Other, please clarify: .....

23. How many members are in your household?.....

24. Can you please indicate using the categories below the amount of your total monthly household income (Rs)?

- |      |                |                          |
|------|----------------|--------------------------|
| i)   | <5,000         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ii)  | 5,000-25,000   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| iii) | 25,000-50,000  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| iv)  | 50,000-100,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| v)   | 100,000<       | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Thank you very much!

## Appendix 4: Information Sheet – Face-to-face questionnaire survey – Sinhalese

**මුහුණට මුහුණලා කෙරෙන ප්‍රශ්නාවලි සමීක්ෂණය සඳහා තොරතුරු පත්‍රිකාව - රණකෙළිය ග්‍රාමීය ජනතාව**  
**ව්‍යාපෘති විස්තරය: රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණය සහ ප්‍රජා සංවර්ධනය**

මහත්මයාණෙනි/මහත්මියනි, මගේ නම දිනේෂා සේනාරත්න යි. මා නවසීලන්තයේ, ඔක්ලන්ඩ් තාක්ෂණික විශ්වවිද්‍යාලයේ (AUT), සත්කාරක හා සංචාරක පාසලේ, නවසීලන්ත සංචාරක පර්යේෂණ ආයතනය (NZTRI) හි පශ්චාත් උපාධි (Ph.D.) අපේක්ෂිතාවකි. මගේ පර්යේෂණයේ උපදේශකත්වය දරන්නේ NZTRI හි අධ්‍යක්ෂක මහාචාර්ය සයිමන් මිල්න් ය. ප්‍රජා සංවර්ධනය සඳහා රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණය කළමනාකරණය ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ රුහුණ ජාතික වනෝද්‍යානය (යාල) ඇසුරින් යන මගේ මෙම පර්යේෂණය සඳහා ඔබගේ දායකත්වය ඉතා ඉහළින් අගය කර සිටිමි. ජාතික වනෝද්‍යාන සංචාරණය තිරසාර ප්‍රජා සංවර්ධනය සඳහා යොදාගැනීමත් එහි ප්‍රතිඵලයක් ලෙස එම ප්‍රජාව එම වනෝද්‍යාන සංරක්ෂණයට දායක කරගතහැක්කේ කෙසේද යන්නත් අධ්‍යයනය අරමුණු කෙරේ. මෙම පර්යේෂණය සංචාරණය, රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සහ ප්‍රජා සංවර්ධනය යන අංශයන්ගේ සම්බන්ධතාවය ප්‍රධාන ජනතාව පිළිබඳව තොරතුරු දැනගැනීමට මා කැමති අතර ඔබේ පිළිතුරු ප්‍රජාවට ප්‍රතිලාභ අතරකරදෙන ආකාරයට රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණය වැඩිදියුණු කිරීමට අවශ්‍ය වටිනා තොරතුරු ලබාදේ. ඔබ ප්‍රශ්නාවලිය සම්පූර්ණකර ලබාදුන් පසුව, මා විසින් එය නවසීලන්තයේ NZTRI, AUT හි දී සකස්කරනු ලබයි. ඔබගේ ඉල්ලීම මත මෙම පර්යේෂණයේ අවසානයේ එහි සාරාංශ වාර්තාවක් ඔබට ඊමේල් පණිවුඩයක් ලෙස ලැබීමට සැලැස්විය හැකිය.

මෙම ප්‍රශ්නාවලි සමීක්ෂණයේ දී යාල රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණයේ ප්‍රතිවිපාක ග්‍රාමීය ප්‍රජාවට බලපා ඇති ආකාරය සහ එය කෙසේ ග්‍රාමීය ප්‍රජාවගේ සංවර්ධනය සඳහා බලපා තිබේද යන්න පිළිබඳ ඔබගෙන් අසනු ලැබේ. කිසිදු ප්‍රශ්නයකට හරි හෝ වැරදි කියා නිශ්චිත පිළිතුරක් නොමැත. යාල රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණය සහ රණකෙළිය ජනතාව පිළිබඳව තොරතුරු දැනගැනීමට මා කැමති අතර ඔබේ පිළිතුරු ප්‍රජාවට ප්‍රතිලාභ අතරකරදෙන ආකාරයට රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණය වැඩිදියුණු කිරීමට අවශ්‍ය වටිනා තොරතුරු ලබාදේ. ඔබ ප්‍රශ්නාවලිය සම්පූර්ණකර ලබාදුන් පසුව, මා විසින් එය නවසීලන්තයේ NZTRI, AUT හි දී සකස්කරනු ලබයි. ඔබගේ ඉල්ලීම මත මෙම පර්යේෂණයේ අවසානයේ එහි සාරාංශ වාර්තාවක් ඔබට ඊමේල් පණිවුඩයක් ලෙස ලැබීමට සැලැස්විය හැකිය.

එසේම මෙම පර්යේෂණයේ සොයාගැනීම් අප පර්යේෂණ ආයතනයේ වෙබ් අඩවියේ [www.nztri.org](http://www.nztri.org) ද ප්‍රකාශකිරීමට නියමිතය. තවද අනාගතයේ දී මෙම පර්යේෂණය ශාස්ත්‍රීය ප්‍රකාශන සහ සමුළුවල ඉදිරිපත් කිරීම වැනි අධ්‍යයන කටයුතු සඳහා පමණක් යොදාගනුපැවැත්වේ. ඔබ ලබාදෙන පිළිතුරුවල රහස්‍යභාවය සුරක්ෂිත අතර එවා ඔබගේ පෞද්ලික අනන්‍යතාව සමඟ සම්බන්ධ නොවේ. ඔබට ලබාදෙන මෙම ප්‍රශ්නාවලියට පිළිතුරු දීමෙන් ඔබ මෙම පර්යේෂණයට සහභාගිවීමට කැමැත්ත පළකරන අතර ඔබ මෙම පර්යේෂණයේ කොටස්කරුවකු වේ. කරුණාකර ඔබ මේ ප්‍රශ්නාවලියේ සෑම ප්‍රශ්නයකටම පිළිතුරු සපයන්න. මෙම පර්යේෂණයට ඔබේ සහභාගිත්වය සහමුලින්ම ස්වේච්ඡා සහගතයි. ඔබට කැමති මොහොතක මෙම පර්යේෂණයෙන් අස්වීමට පුළුවන. ඔබට ප්‍රශ්නාවලියේ කිසියම් ප්‍රශ්නයක් හෝ වචනයක් නොතේරේ නම් එය සමීක්ෂණය සිදුකරන පර්යේෂකයාගෙන් හෝ පර්යේෂක සහකරු ගෙන් අසන්න. මම ඔබ ප්‍රශ්නාවලි සමීක්ෂණය සඳහා ලබාදෙන කාලය සහ සහයෝගය වෙනුවෙන් කෘතඥපූර්වක වෙමි.

**පර්යේෂක: දිනේෂා සේනාරත්න**  
**සම්බන්ධකරගැනීමට තොරතුරු:**  
නවසීලන්ත සංචාරක පර්යේෂණ ආයතනය (NZTRI),  
සංස්කෘතික සහ සමාජීය පීඨය,  
ඔක්ලන්ඩ් තාක්ෂණික විශ්වවිද්‍යාලයේ (AUT),  
පෞද්ගලික බැගය 92006,  
ඔක්ලන්ඩ් 1020, නවසීලන්තය.  
දුර: +64 921 9999, දිගුව: 8890 හෝ +94 71 2283806,  
ඊමේල්: [dsenarat@aut.ac.nz](mailto:dsenarat@aut.ac.nz)

**ව්‍යාපෘති උපදේශක: මහාචාර්ය සයිමන් මිල්න්**  
**සම්බන්ධකරගැනීමට තොරතුරු:**  
නවසීලන්ත සංචාරක පර්යේෂණ ආයතනය (NZTRI),  
සංස්කෘතික සහ සමාජීය පීඨය,  
ඔක්ලන්ඩ් තාක්ෂණික විශ්වවිද්‍යාලයේ (AUT),  
පෞද්ගලික බැගය 92006,  
ඔක්ලන්ඩ් 1020, නවසීලන්තය.  
දුර: +64 992 19245, දිගුව: 9876  
ඊමේල්: [simon.milne@aut.ac.nz](mailto:simon.milne@aut.ac.nz)

මෙම පර්යේෂණය පිළිබඳ සැලකිලිමත්වන ඔබ ප්‍රථමයෙන්ම ඒ පිළිබඳ දත්ත සිටිය යුත්තේ පර්යේෂණ ව්‍යාපෘතියේ උපදේශකවරයාටය. මෙම පර්යේෂණය ක්‍රියාත්මකවන ආකාරය පිළිබඳ සැලකිලිමත්වන ඔබ AUTECH හි සභාපතිනිය වන කේට් ඕ'කොනර් සම්බන්ධ කරගත යුතුය. දුර: +64 921 9999, දිගුව: 6038, ඊමේල්: [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz)

## Appendix 5: Face-to-face questionnaire survey – Sinhalese

මුහුණට මුහුණලා කෙරෙන ප්‍රශ්නාවලි සමීක්ෂණය සඳහා තොරතුරු පත්‍රිකාව - රණකෙළිය ග්‍රාමීය ජනතාව

ව්‍යාපෘති මාතෘකාව: ප්‍රජා සංවර්ධනය සඳහා රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණය කළමනාකරණය: ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ රුහුණ ජාතික වනෝද්‍යානය (යාල) ඇසුරින්.

**දත්ත රැස්කිරීම අධියර II:** මෙම අධියර සකස්කර ඇත්තේ සිද්ධි අධ්‍යයන ප්‍රවේශය භාවිත කරමින් ප්‍රජාවගේ මට්ටමින් රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණයේ ප්‍රතිඵලයක් අවබෝධකරගැනීමෙන් දෙවන විශේෂිත අරමුණ සඳහා පිළිතුරු සැපයීමටයි.

- රණකෙළිය කුටුම්භයන්ගේ සමාජ ආර්ථික දත්ත රැස්කිරීමත් යාල සමග පවතින ඔවුන්ගේ අන්තර්ක්‍රියා රැගැටුම් සහ රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණයේ ප්‍රතිඵලයක් රැස්කිරීම.
- දත්ත රැස්කිරීම අධියර 2 හි පසු අවස්ථාවක දී පැවැත්වෙන සහභාගීත්ව සිතියම් අභ්‍යාසය සඳහා ජනතා නියැදිය තෝරාගැනීම.

නිවාස යොමු අංකය

### පසුබිම් තොරතුරු

1. ඔබ කොපමණ කලක් රණකෙළියේ පදිංචිවී සිටියේද? අවුරුදු .....
2. ඔබ රණකෙළියේ ඉපදී වැඩුනෙක්ද? ඔව් ☐ නැහැ ☐
3. ඔබට රණකෙළියෙහි ජීවිතයේ ගුණාත්මක තත්වය පිළිබඳව දැනෙන්නේ කෙසේද?
  - i) ඉතා හොඳයි ☐
  - ii) හොඳයි ☐
  - iii) මධ්‍යස්ථයි ☐
  - iv) නරකයි ☐
  - v) ඉතා නරකයි ☐
4. ඔබගේ රැකියාව කුමක්ද? .....
  - 4.1 එය රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණයට සම්බන්ධ වූවක්ද? ඔව් නම්,
    - 4.1.1 ඔබ රැකියාවකරන ස්ථානය කුමක්ද? .....
    - 4.2 එය යාල රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණය සඳහා කුමනාකාර සේවයක් සපයයිද? .....
5. ඔවුන්ගේ රැකියාව කුමක්ද? .....
  - 5.1 එය රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණයට සම්බන්ධ වූවක්ද? ඔව් නම්,
    - 5.2 ඔවුන්ගේ රැකියාවකරන ස්ථානය කුමක්ද? .....
    - 5.2.2 එය යාල රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණය සඳහා කුමනාකාර සේවයක් සපයයිද? .....

### යාල වනෝද්‍යානය සහ රණකෙළිය ප්‍රජාව

6. යාල වනෝද්‍යානය ඔබට දැනෙන්නේ (විස්තර කළහැක්කේ) කෙසේද? .....
7. ඔබගේ එදිනෙදා ජීවිතය යාල වනෝද්‍යානය සමග බැඳී තිබේද? ඔව් නම්, ඒ කෙසේද යන්න ශ්‍රේණිගතකරන්න.
 

i)	දඩයම් කිරීම	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii)	දූව ලබාගැනීම	<input type="checkbox"/>
iii)	ඖෂධ පැලෑටි එකතුකිරීම	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv)	ආහාර ද්‍රව්‍ය එකතුකිරීම (පළතුරු ආදිය)	<input type="checkbox"/>
v)	හේන් වගාව	<input type="checkbox"/>
vi)	රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණය ආශ්‍රිත රැකියාව	<input type="checkbox"/>
vii)	සංචාරණය රැකියාව	<input type="checkbox"/>
viii)	වෙනත්, කරුණාකර පැහැදිලිකරන්න	<input type="text"/>
8. යාල වනෝද්‍යානය සහ රණකෙළිය ප්‍රජාව අතර පවතින සාමාන්‍ය සම්බන්ධතාවය කුමනාකාරද?
  - i) අතිශය ශක්තිමත් ☐
  - ii) ශක්තිමත් ☐
  - iii) මධ්‍යස්ථයි ☐
  - iv) දුර්වලයි ☐
  - v) අතිශය දුර්වලයි ☐
  - 7.1 කරුණාකර ඔබගේ පිළිතුරට වඩාත් වැදගත්ම හේතුව සඳහන් කරන්න .....
9. ඔබට කවදාක හෝ යාල වනෝද්‍යානය සමග ඇතිවූ ගැටුමක් පිළිබඳ පෞද්ගලික අත්දැකීමක් තිබේද? ඔව් නම්,
  - 9.1 කරුණාකර එම ගැටුමට බලපාන වඩාත් වැදගත්ම හේතුව සඳහන් කරන්න.....



- 9.2 මෙම ගැටුමට පාදකවන හේතු  
මොනවාද?.....
- 9.3 ඔබ මෙම ගැටුම් සඳහා යෝජනාකරන විසඳුම්  
මොනවාද?.....
10. ඔබ මෑතකාලීනව යාල රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණය ආශ්‍රිතව කිසියම් වෙනසක් දකින්නේද? ඔව් නම්,  
10.1 ඔබ සාක්ෂි දරණ වඩාත් වැදගත්ම විපර්යාසය කුමක්ද?
- .....

#### රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණයේ ප්‍රතිවිපාක සහ රණකෙළිය ප්‍රජාව

යාල වනෝද්‍යානයේ සංරක්ෂණ

11. ඔබ සිතන විදිහට යාල රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණය  
i) ඉතා හොඳයි ☐ ii) හොඳයි ☐ iii) මධ්‍යස්ථයි ☐ iv) නරකයි ☐ v) ඉතා නරකයි ☐  
11.1 කරුණාකර ඔබගේ පිළිතුරට වඩාත් වැදගත්ම හේතුව සඳහන් කරන්න  
.....
12. ඔබේ ප්‍රජාවට බලපාන යාල රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණයේ සමාජ-සංස්කෘතික බලපෑම් තිබේද?  
i) ඉතා හොඳයි ☐ ii) හොඳයි ☐ iii) මධ්‍යස්ථයි ☐ iv) නරකයි ☐ v) ඉතා නරකයි ☐  
12.1 කරුණාකර ඔබගේ පිළිතුරට වඩාත් වැදගත්ම හේතුව සඳහන් කරන්න  
.....
13. ඔබේ ප්‍රජාවට බලපාන යාල රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණයේ දේශපාලන-ආර්ථික බලපෑම් තිබේද? ඔව් නම්,  
i) ඉතා හොඳයි ☐ ii) හොඳයි ☐ iii) මධ්‍යස්ථයි ☐ iv) නරකයි ☐ v) ඉතා නරකයි ☐  
13.1 කරුණාකර ඔබගේ පිළිතුරට වඩාත් වැදගත්ම හේතුව සඳහන් කරන්න  
.....
14. ඔබේ ප්‍රජාවට බලපාන යාල රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණයේ පාරිසරික බලපෑම් තිබේද? ඔව් නම්,  
i) ඉතා හොඳයි ☐ ii) හොඳයි ☐ iii) මධ්‍යස්ථයි ☐ iv) නරකයි ☐ v) ඉතා නරකයි ☐  
14.1 කරුණාකර ඔබගේ පිළිතුරට වඩාත් වැදගත්ම හේතුව සඳහන් කරන්න  
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#### රණකෙළිය ප්‍රජාවට බලපාන රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණයේ ප්‍රතිවිපාක

යාල වනෝද්‍යානයේ සංරක්ෂණ

15. ඔබ සිතන විදිහට, රණකෙළිය කුටුම්භයට බලපාන යාල රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණයේ ප්‍රතිවිපාක  
මොනවාද?  
i) ඉතා හොඳයි ☐ ii) හොඳයි ☐ iii) මධ්‍යස්ථයි ☐ iv) නරකයි ☐ v) ඉතා නරකයි ☐  
15.1 කරුණාකර ඔබගේ පිළිතුරට වඩාත් වැදගත්ම හේතුව සඳහන්  
කරන්න.....
16. ඔබේ කුටුම්භයට බලපාන යාල රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණයේ ආර්ථික බලපෑම් තිබේද?  
ii) ඉතා හොඳයි ☐ ii) හොඳයි ☐ iii) මධ්‍යස්ථයි ☐ iv) නරකයි ☐ v) ඉතා නරකයි ☐  
16.1 කරුණාකර ඔබගේ පිළිතුරට වඩාත් වැදගත්ම හේතුව සඳහන් කරන්න  
.....

#### සංරක්ෂණය පිළිබඳ ආකල්ප

17. ඔබ යාල වනෝද්‍යානයේ සංරක්ෂණ ඉලක්ක පිළිබඳ දන්නවාද? ඔව් නම්,  
17.1 ඔබ දන්නා පරිදි යාල වනෝද්‍යානයට වැදගත්ම වන සංරක්ෂණ ඉලක්කය  
කුමක්ද?.....
18. යාල රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණය ඔබගේ සංරක්ෂණ ආකල්ප වෙත බලපෑම්කර තිබේද? ඔව් නම්,  
18.1 කොහොමද බලපාන්නේ යන්නට උදාහරණයක් දෙන්න  
.....
19. ඔබ යාල වනෝද්‍යානයේ සංරක්ෂණ ඉලක්ක සැපිරීමට දායකවීමට කැමතිද? ඔව් නම්,  
19.1 කරුණාකර එය සාක්ෂාත් කරගැනීමට ඔබ දායක වීමට බලාපොරොත්තු වන වඩාත් යෝග්‍යම  
ක්‍රමය සඳහන් කරන්න .....
- නැති නම්,  
19.2 ඔබ දායකවීමට අකමැති  
ඇයි?.....

**මූලික සමාජ-ආර්ථික තොරතුරු (සංඛ්‍යාත්මක විශ්ලේෂණය සඳහා පමණි)**

20. ස්ත්‍රී පුරුෂ භාවය? ස්ත්‍රී ☐ පුරුෂ ☐

21. ඔබගේ වයස කොපමණද? 18-30 ☐ 31-45 ☐ 46-55 ☐ 56-65 ☐ 66 වැඩි ☐

22. ඔබ සම්පූර්ණකර තිබෙන ඉහළම අධ්‍යාපන සුදුසුකම කුමක්ද?

- i) ප්‍රාථමික ☐
- ii) සාමාන්‍යපෙල ☐
- iii) උසස්පෙල ☐
- iv) කාර්මික විද්‍යාල ☐
- v) ප්‍රථම උපාධිය ☐
- vi) වෙනත්, කරුණාකර පැහැදිලිකරන්න

23. ඔබගේ කුටුම්භයේ සාමාජිකයන් ගණන කොපමණද? .....

24. කරුණාකර ඔබගේ කුටුම්භයේ සම්පූර්ණ මාසික ආදායම පවසන්න (රු.)?

- VI) <5,000 ☐
- VII) 5,000-25,000 ☐
- VIII) 25,000-50,000 ☐
- IX) 50,000-100,000 ☐
- X) 100,000< ☐

මෙම සමීක්ෂණයට සහභාගිවීම පිළිබඳ ඔබට බොහොමත් ස්තූතියි!

## **Appendix 6: Participant Information Sheet for semi-structured interview – Key stakeholders**

### **Date Information Sheet Produced:**

03 / May / 2019

### **Project Title**

*Managing Protected Area (PA) Tourism and Community Development: the Case of Ruhuna National Park (Yala), Sri Lanka.*

### **An Invitation**

My name is Dinesha Senarathna. I am a PhD student from the New Zealand Tourism Research Institute (NZTRI), School of Hospitality of Tourism, Faculty of Culture and Society, Auckland University of Technology (AUT), New Zealand. My supervisor is Professor Simon Milne, the Director of NZTRI. I would be grateful if you would participate in my doctoral research project on Protected Area (PA) tourism and sustainable community development in Yala. The research examines the links between tourism, PA, and sustainable community development by engaging with a range of key stakeholder groups. As a member of one (or more) of these key stakeholder groups you are invited to participate in this research and your involvement is highly appreciated.

### **What is the purpose of this research?**

This research aims to find how national park focused tourism can be managed to generate sustainable community development and, in turn, influence the willingness of communities to embrace conservation efforts and support parks' broader environmental and societal goals. The findings of this research will be used only for academic purposes such as publishing in journal articles and conference proceedings. The research will also provide information to inform national park policies and the development sustainable community benefits from PA related tourism in Sri Lanka and other developing countries.

### **How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?**

You have been identified and selected from publicly available data sources e.g. the official website of your working place or the telephone directory. People who are invited to contribute to this research include: officers and guides of wildlife office in Yala, officials of the local authority in the Thissamaharama Divisional Secretariat Division (DSD), Tour operators and hotel managers, village officers, and also members of the local community in Ranakeliya. Your participation for this research is entirely voluntary.

### **How do I agree to participate in this research?**

To participate in this research, simply confirm an appointment time by a return email or telephone. I will also ask you to sign a Consent Form (copy attached) that gives me your written consent to participate in the interview. Your participation in this research is voluntary and whether or not you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You can withdraw from the study at any time. If you withdraw from the study, please know that all relevant information

including tapes and transcripts, or parts will be destroyed. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of data may not be possible.

**What will happen in this research?**

You will be participating in the first phase of this study, which is a semi-structured interview. I will ask a series of questions to determine your involvement with PA tourism: including your perception of local community engagement with Yala and tourism and the relationships that exist between different stakeholders. The interview will be conducted and audio recorded with your permission. If you agree to participate I will ask you to sign a Consent Form. Your participation is valuable to this research as it helps to incorporate the different stakeholders' perspectives on PA tourism in Yala.

**What are the discomforts and risks?**

The interview will take approximately 40-60 minutes. You are giving your valuable time and information to help with this research and I can assure you that I have considered your well-being. The information you provide will be treated as confidential and will only be viewed by the researcher and her supervisors.

**How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?**

Participation and answers to any questions are fully voluntary. The interview is designed to gain an understanding of the relationships between key stakeholder groups engaged in PA tourism practices in Yala National Park, so there are no right or wrong answers. Any information you provide will be helpful. The researcher is bound by her University ethics procedures and processes and will not pass on any information to others.

**What are the benefits?**

This research will serve the academic community who are looking for new insights into PA tourism. The thesis will also assist key stakeholders such as PA tourism practitioners, local authorities, policy makers (e.g. Departments of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism in Sri Lanka and other developing countries) and proximate communities of PA with practical guidance to develop the evidence-based tourism approaches and strategies.

This research will help me to widen the knowledge on PA tourism and community development in my country setting. It will also help to complete my Ph.D. degree and fulfil the requirements of my academic career.

**How will my privacy be protected?**

All answers are confidential and will not be linked in any way to your personal information. The information will not be distributed to anyone other than the researcher and her supervisors. The field data collected during the research will be aggregated during the data analysis process and individual or organisational identity will not be presented in the findings.

**What are the costs of participating in this research?**

There are no financial costs to participating in this research but you will provide some of your time. To thank you for your participation, I will present you with a small souvenir from New

Zealand at the end of the interview and the findings of this research will be disseminated in the form of a summary report to you via an email after the thesis is completed.

**What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?**

The interview will be set up approximately two weeks before it is conducted. You can consider your participation during this time. I will contact you to see if you would like to be interviewed and if so, to make an appointment to visit you at your office at a time that suits you. The answers will be audio recorded and notes will be taken but only with your written consent.

**Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?**

The findings of this research may be used in presentations and publications with an academic context. The results of this research will also be available on our institute website [www.nztri.org](http://www.nztri.org). If you wish I send you the link to the thesis and a summary report of the findings when the thesis is completed.

**What do I do if I have concerns about this research?**

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor,

Professor Simon Milne, Tel: + 64 992 19245 ext. 9876, Email [simon.milne@aut.ac.nz](mailto:simon.milne@aut.ac.nz)

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEK, Kate O'Connor, [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz), 921 9999 ext. 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Dinesha Senarathna, Tel: +64 921 9999 ext. 8890 or +94 71 2283806 Email: [dsenarat@aut.ac.nz](mailto:dsenarat@aut.ac.nz)

**Researcher Contact Details:**

**Dinesha Senarathna**, New Zealand Tourism Research Institute, Faculty of Society and Culture, Auckland University of Technology, Private Bag 92006, Auckland 1020, New Zealand Tel: +64 921 9999 ext. 8890 or +94 71 2283806, Email: [dsenarat@aut.ac.nz](mailto:dsenarat@aut.ac.nz)

**Project Supervisor Contact Details:**

**Professor Simon Milne**, Director of New Zealand Tourism Research Institute, Faculty of Society and Culture,

Auckland University of Technology, Private Bag 92006, Auckland 1020, New Zealand Tel: + 64 992 19245 ext. 9876,

Email [simon.milne@aut.ac.nz](mailto:simon.milne@aut.ac.nz)

*Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 18/July/ 2019, AUTEK Reference number 19/159.*

**Appendix 7: Consent Form for semi-structured Interview – Key stakeholders**

# Consent Form

**Project title:** *Managing Protected Area (PA) Tourism and Community Development: the Case of Ruhuna National Park (Yala), Sri Lanka.*

**Project Supervisor:** *Professor Simon Milne*

**Researcher:** *Dinesha Senarathna*

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 03/ May /2019
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ☐ I am over the age of 18.
- ☐ I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews
- ☐ I understand that the interview will also be audio-taped and transcribed with my permission.
- ☐ I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ If I withdraw from the study, I understand that all relevant information including tapes and transcripts, or parts will be destroyed. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research.
- ☐ I wish to receive a summary of the research findings (please tick one): Yes ☐ No ☐

Participant's signature:.....

Participant's name:.....

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Date:

*Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form*

## Appendix 8: Semi-structured Interview Guide – Key stakeholders

*Project Title: Managing Protected Area (PA) Tourism for Sustainable Community Development: the Case of Ruhuna National Park (Yala), Sri Lanka.*

**Data collection phase I:** This phase of the research is designed to identify the relationships between key stakeholder groups engaged in PA tourism practices in order to achieve the following objectives.

### Interview Purpose:

- To determine the stakeholders' interaction and involvement with tourism and their use of key resources (human, environmental etc) in Ranakeliya.
- To understand perceptions of stakeholders about local community engagement in PA tourism and the power structures that underpins this.

Interview structure	Indicative question areas	Time
<b>Introduction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish the relationship with the local authority personnel and experts by providing some personal background about the researcher.</li> <li>• Briefly introduce the research and its purpose</li> </ul>	5'
<b>Background</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell me a bit about yourself, where are you from? and what is your past work experience?</li> <li>• Tell me about the place/organisation you currently work in work: what is its role and what relationship does it have with PA tourism in Yala?</li> <li>• How long have you been working for this organisation? What is the role of your position? What responsibilities you have?</li> </ul>	5'
<b>Stakeholders' relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What relationship does your organisation have with key stakeholders in PA tourism and Yala (list of key stakeholders)?</li> <li>• Does your organisation exchange any of the following with these stakeholders: financial capital, human resources, services, products, information...? if YES, describe this exchange process?</li> <li>• Do you think these relationships between your organisation and other stakeholders' work well? if YES, why? if NOT, why?</li> </ul>	10'
<b>Resources in Ranakeliya</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What resources of Ranakeliya are used to support PA tourism in Yala? (e.g. social, human, cultural, political, natural, financial and built).</li> <li>• How does your organisation access the resources of Ranakeliya to enable PA tourism in Yala?</li> <li>• Are there any challenges in accessing these resources?</li> <li>• Would you characterise this resource use as something that can be sustained in the short and medium term?</li> </ul>	10'
<b>Power relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thinking about PA tourism and Yala which stakeholder groups do you feel have the most influential in shaping its development and impacts?</li> <li>• How does your organisation share the benefits generated from PA tourism? (Does the local community benefit directly or indirectly? If YES, how? (e.g. employments, facilities, etc.)</li> <li>• Are there any areas of tension between your organisation and the Ranakeliya community in terms of how the benefits and costs generated through PA tourism in Yala are shared and distributed? If YES, can you describe the nature of the tension? If NOT, comment on how tensions have been avoided.</li> </ul>	10'
<b>Other comments</b>	Do you have any further comments you would like to share?	5'
<b>Wrap up</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasise that the research ensures anonymity and confidentiality of all participants and their organisations.</li> </ul>	5'

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask for the best way to send the notes/interview transcripts to review by the participants to ensure clarity and fidelity of their responses.</li> <li>• Thanks for the participation.</li> </ul>	
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A stakeholder is identified as “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by” tourism activities in a particular area (Freeman, 1984, p. 46).

“Community Capital is a resource or assets that can be used, invested or exchanged to create new resources” (Flora, Flora & Fey, 2004, p.1).



## Appendix 9: Participant Information Sheet for the semi-structured interviews – Sinhalese

අර්ධ-ව්‍යුහගත සම්මුඛ සාකච්ඡා සඳහා සහභාගීත්ව තොරතුරු පත්‍රිකාව - ප්‍රධාන පාර්ශවකරුවන්

දත්ත පත්‍රිකාව සකස්කළ දිනය  
03/05/2019

ව්‍යාපෘති මාතෘකාව

ප්‍රජා සංවර්ධනය සඳහා රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණය කළමනාකරණය ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ රුහුණ ජාතික වනෝද්‍යානය (යාල) ඇසුරින්

ආරාධනය

මගේ නම දිනේෂා සේනාරත්න යි. මා නවසීලන්තයේ, ඔක්ලන්ඩ් තාක්ෂණික විශ්වවිද්‍යාලයේ (AUT), සත්කාරක හා සංචාරක පාසලේ, නවසීලන්ත සංචාරක පර්යේෂණ ආයතනය (NZTRI) හි පශ්චාත් උපාධි (Ph.D.) අපේක්ෂිතාවකි. මගේ පර්යේෂණයේ උපදේශකත්වය දරන්නේ NZTRI හි අධ්‍යක්ෂක මහාචාර්ය සයිමන් මිල්න් ය. මෙම පර්යේෂණය සංචාරණය, රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සහ ප්‍රජා සංවර්ධනය යන අංශයන්ගේ සම්බන්ධතාවය ප්‍රධාන පාර්ශවකරුවන්ගේ දායකත්වය ඇසුරින් අධ්‍යයනය කිරීම අපේක්ෂා කරයි. ඔබේ මෙම ප්‍රධාන පාර්ශවකරුවකුවන බැවින් මෙම පර්යේෂණයට සහභාගි වීම සඳහා ආරාධනා කෙරෙන අතර ඔබගේ දායකත්වය ඉතා ඉහළින් අගය කර සිටිමි. එසේම ඔබගේ සහභාගිවීම වෙනුවෙන් කෘතඥ වෙමි.

මෙම පර්යේෂණයේ අරමුණ

ජාතික වනෝද්‍යාන සංචාරණය තිරසාර ප්‍රජා සංවර්ධනය සඳහා යොදාගැනීමත් එහි ප්‍රතිඵලයක් ලෙස එම ප්‍රජාව එම වනෝද්‍යාන සංරක්ෂණයට දායක කරගතහැක්කේ කෙසේද යන්නත් අධ්‍යයනය අරමුණු කෙරේ. එසේම මෙම පර්යේෂණය ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ සහ අනෙකුත් සංවර්ධනයවන රටවල වනෝද්‍යාන සංරක්ෂණය ප්‍රතිපත්ති සකස්කිරීමට සහ රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ තිරසාර ලෙස ප්‍රජාව වෙත ප්‍රතිලාභ සැපයීමට අවශ්‍ය දැනුම නිෂ්පාදනය කරයි. මෙම පර්යේෂණයේ සොයාගැනු ලබන දත්ත පර්යේෂණය ලිපි සම්පාදනය සහ සමුළුවල ඉදිරිපත් කිරීම වැනි අධ්‍යයන කටයුතු සඳහා පමණක් ම භාවිත කෙරේ.

ඔබ මෙම පර්යේෂණය සඳහා තෝරාගැනීම සහ ආරාධනය

ඔබ මෙම පර්යේෂණය සඳහා හඳුනාගැනීම සහ තෝරාගැනීම ඔබගේ රැකියා ස්ථානයේ වෙබ් අඩවිය හෝ දුරකථන නාමාවලිය වැනි පොදු භාවිතය සඳහා පවතින තොරතුරු භාවිතකරන ලදී. රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ, සංචාරණය සහ ප්‍රජා සංවර්ධනය සම්බන්ධව නිපුණත්වයක් දක්වන යාල වනෝද්‍යානයේ නිලධාරීන් සහ මාර්ගෝපදේශකවරුන්, තිස්සමහාරාම ප්‍රාදේශීය ලේකම් කාර්යාලයේ පරිපාලන නිලධාරීන්, පෞද්ගලික වාරිකා සංවිධායකයින් සහ හෝටල් අයිතිකරුවන්, ග්‍රාම නිලධාරී සහ රණකෙළිය ග්‍රාමීය ජනතාව මෙම පර්යේෂණයට සහභාගිවීමට ආරාධනා ලබයි. මෙම පර්යේෂණයට ඔබේ සහභාගිත්වය සහමුලින්ම ස්වේච්ඡා සහගතයි.

ඔබ මෙම පර්යේෂණයට සහභාගිවීමට කැමැත්ත පළකළකරන්නේ කෙසේද?

මෙම පර්යේෂණයට ඔබ සහභාගි කරගැනීම සඳහා මා ඔබ ඊමේල් හෝ දුරකථනයෙන් සම්බන්ධකරගත් පසුව සම්මුඛ සාකච්ඡාවට වේලාව තහවුරු කරන්න. එසේම මා ඔබට මේ සමඟ එවන පර්යේෂණයට සහභාගිවීමට කැමැත්ත පළකරන පෝරමය අත්සන්කර මා හට ලබා දෙන්න. ඔබ මෙම පර්යේෂණයට සහභාගිවියයුත්තේ ස්වේච්ඡාවෙනි. මෙම පර්යේෂණයට සහභාගිවීමෙන් ඔබට විශේෂ වාසියක් හෝ සහභාගිතොවීමෙන් පාඩුවක් නොවේ. ඔබට කැමති මොහොතක මෙම පර්යේෂණයෙන් අස්වීමට පුළුවන. ඔබ පර්යේෂණයෙන් අස්වීමට තීරණය කළහොත් ඔබේ සම්මුඛ සාකච්ඡාවට අදාළ පිටපත් හා හඬපට සියලු දත්ත විනාශ කරයි. එසේ වුවත් පර්යේෂණයේ සොයාගැනීම් සිදුකිරීම් අවසන්වූ පසුව ඔබේ තොරතුරු ඉවත්කිරීමට නොහැක.

මෙම පර්යේෂණයේ දී සිදුවන්නේ කුමක්ද?

මෙම පර්යේෂණය සංචාරණය, රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සහ ප්‍රජා සංවර්ධනය යන අංශයන්ගේ සම්බන්ධතාවය ප්‍රධාන පාර්ශවකරුවන්ගේ දායකත්වය ඇසුරින් අධ්‍යයනය කිරීම අපේක්ෂා කරයි. මෙම පර්යේෂණයේ ක්ෂේත්‍ර වැඩ යාල, තිස්සමහාරාම සහ රණකෙළිය ආශ්‍රිතව සිදුකිරීමට මාස තුනක පමණ කාලයක් ගතවේ. ක්ෂේත්‍ර වැඩ අධ්‍යයන දෙකකින් සමන්විතය. දෙවන අධ්‍යයන පළමු අධ්‍යයන අවසානයේ ආරම්භවේ. පළමු අධ්‍යයනේදී රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණයේ ප්‍රධාන පාර්ශවකරුවන් සමඟ අර්ධ-ව්‍යුහගත සම්මුඛ සාකච්ඡා සිදුකෙරේ. දෙවන අධ්‍යයන රණකෙළිය ග්‍රාමීය ජනතාව සමඟ මුහුණට මුහුණලා කෙරෙන ප්‍රශ්නාවලි සමීක්ෂණයක් සහ සහභාගීත්ව සිතියම් අභ්‍යාසයක් යන දත්ත රැස්කිරීමේ ක්‍රම දෙකකින් සමන්විතය.

ඔබ සහභාගි වන්නේ මෙම පර්යේෂණයේ පළමු අධ්‍යයනේ අර්ධ-ව්‍යුහගත සම්මුඛ සාකච්ඡාවන්ටය. රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණය සඳහා ප්‍රධාන පාර්ශවකරුවන්ගේ දායකත්වය, රණකෙළිය ආශ්‍රිත ප්‍රජා සම්පත් සමඟ ඇති සම්බන්ධතාව, එසේම රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණය සඳහා රණකෙළිය ප්‍රජාවගේ දායකත්වය පිළිබඳ ඔබේ ආකල්ප සහ යාල රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණයේ දී ප්‍රධාන පාර්ශවකරුවන් අතර බලය සංසරණය වන ආකාරය අනාවරණය කරගැනීම සඳහා මා විසින් ප්‍රශ්න රැසක් අසනු ලැබේ. එකඟත්වය පළකරන පෝරමය

අත්සන්කිරීමෙන් මෙම පර්යේෂණයට සහභාගිවීම සහ සම්මුඛ සාකච්ඡාව හඬපටිගතකරණයට ඔබගේ අවසරය ලබාදිය හැකිය. මෙම පර්යේෂණයට සහභාගිවීම ඉතා අගය කොට සළකනුයේ එමගින් විවිධ පාර්ශවකරුවන්ගේ රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණය පිළිබඳ දෘෂ්ටිකෝණයන් ඒකාග්‍රීකරගැනීමට උපකාර වන බැවිනි.

**උද්ගතවියහැකි අපහසුතා සහ අවදානම් තත්ව**

මෙම සම්මුඛ සාකච්ඡාවට ආසන්න වශයෙන් මිනිත්තු 40-60ක් ගතවේ. මේ සඳහා ඔබ ඔබගේ වටිනා කාලය හා තොරතුරු ලබාදෙන අතර සම්මුඛ සාකච්ඡාවට අතරතුර මට ඔබගේ සුවපහසුව තහවුරු කළ හැකිය. නමුත් ඔබ ඇතැම් විටෙක සම්මුඛ සාකච්ඡාවට භාජනය වීම නිසා හෝ එය හඬපටිගතකරණය කිරීම නිසා තරමක නොසන්සුන් තත්වයකට පත්වියහැකිය. ඒ කෙසේ වෙතත්, ඔබ පිළිතුරු දීමට අපහසු හෝ ඔබට දැනීමක් නොමැති ඕනෑම ප්‍රශ්නයකට පිළිතුරු නොදී සිටීමේ නිදහස පවතී. ඔබ ලබාදෙන දත්තවල රහස්‍යභාවය සුරක්ෂිත කරනු ලබන අතර එවා දකින්නේ පර්යේෂණකරු වන මා හා මගේ උපදේශකවරුන් පමණි.

**අපහසුතා සහ අවදානම් තත්ව වලක්වන්නේ කෙසේද?**

ඔබට ඇතැම් ප්‍රශ්නවලට පිළිතුරු ලබානොදී සිටිය හැකිය. මෙම සම්මුඛ සාකච්ඡාවට සහභාගිවීම සහ පිළිතුරු ලබාදීම සහමුලින්ම ස්වකැමැත්තවේ. මෙම සම්මුඛ සාකච්ඡාව සකස්කර තිබෙන්නේ යාල රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණයට සම්බන්ධ ප්‍රධාන පාර්ශවකරුවන් අතර පවතින සම්බන්ධතාවය අවබෝධකරගැනීමටයි. මෙහි සා කිසිදු ප්‍රශ්නයකට හරි හෝ වැරදි කියා නිශ්චිත පිළිතුරක් නොමැත. ඔබ ලබාදෙන ඕනෑම පිළිතුරක් මෙම පර්යේෂණයට උපකාර වියහැකිය. මා AUT විශ්වවිද්‍යාලයේ සඳාචාර ප්‍රතිපත්තින්ට සහ ක්‍රමවේදයන්ට අනුකූලව කටයුතු කිරීමට තදින්ම බැඳී සිටින බැවින් කිසිම තොරතුරක් බාහිර පුද්ගලයෙකුට ලබා නොදීමට බැඳී සිටිමි.

**මෙම පර්යේෂණයෙහි ප්‍රතිලාභ මොනවාද?**

මෙම පර්යේෂණය රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණය පිළිබඳ නව දර්ශනයක් සොයන ශාස්ත්‍රීය ප්‍රජාවට උපකාර වේ. එසේම මෙම පර්යේෂණ නිබන්ධනය රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණය ආශ්‍රිත කර්මාන්තයේ යෙදෙන්නන්ට, පළාත් පාලන අධිකාරීන්ට, ප්‍රතිපත්ති සකසන්නන්ට (උදා: වන ජීවී දෙපාර්තමේන්තුව, සංචාරක අධිකාරිය සහ වෙනත් සංවර්ධනය වන රට වලට) සහ රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ ආශ්‍රිත ජනතාවට උපායමාර්ග සහ සාදක මත පදනම් වූ ප්‍රවේශයන් සංවර්ධනය කිරීමට ප්‍රායෝගික මගපෙන්වීමක් ලබාදෙයි.

මෙම පර්යේෂණය මාගේ රටෙහි රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණය සහ ප්‍රජා සංවර්ධනය පිළිබඳ දැනුම වර්ධනයට උපකාර වේ. එසේම එය මගේ ජයග්‍රාහී උපාධිය සම්පූර්ණ කිරීමෙන් මගේ ශාස්ත්‍රීය වෘත්තියෙහි අවශ්‍යතාව සඵල කෙරේ. තවද අනාගතයේ දී මම මෙම පර්යේෂණය පාදක කරගනිමින් ශාස්ත්‍රීය ප්‍රකාශන සහ සමුලවල ඉදිරිපත් කිරීමට ද බලාපොරොත්තු වේ.

**ඔබේ පෞද්ගලිකත්වය ආරක්ෂාවන්නේ කෙසේද?**

සියලුම පිළිතුරු අතිශය රහසිගත අතර ඔබගේ කිසිම පෞද්ගලික තොරතුරකට සම්බන්ධ නොවේ. ඔබ සපයන තොරතුරු සියල්ලෙහිම රහස්‍ය භාවය සුරක්ෂිත කරන අතර පර්යේෂකයා හා උපදේශනවරු හැරුනකොට වෙනත් කිසිවකුටත් ලබානොදේ. විවිධ ක්‍රමවේද භාවිතයෙන් එක්රැස්කරන ලද ක්ෂේත්‍රීය තොරතුරු දත්ත විශ්ලේෂණයේ දී සම්පිණ්ඩනය කරනු ලබන අතර පෞද්ගලික හෝ ආයතනික අනන්‍යතා පර්යේෂණ සොයාගැනීම් හි ඉදිරිපත් නොවේ.

**මෙම පර්යේෂණයට සහභාගිවීම සඳහා ඔබට වැයවන්නේ මොනවාද?**

ඔබට වැයවන එකම දේ වන්නේ ඔබේ කාලයයි. එය ආසන්න වශයෙන් මිනිත්තු 40-60 අතර වේ. ඔබේ සහභාගිත්වයට ස්තූතිකිරීම සඳහා මෙම පර්යේෂණයේ සොයාගැනීම් නිබන්ධනය අවසන් කිරීමෙන් අනතුරුව සාරාංශ වාර්ථාවක ස්වරූපයෙන් ඔබට ඊමේල් පණිවුඩයකින් එවනු ලැබේ.

**ඔබට මෙම පර්යේෂණයට සහභාගිවීමට කෙරෙන ආරාධනය පිළිබඳ සලකා බලන්නේ කෙසේද?**

සම්මුඛ සාකච්ඡාව ආසන්න වශයෙන් සති දෙකකට වත් පෙර සූදානම් කරනු ලැබේ. ඔබට මේ කාලය අතරතුර එයට සහභාගිවන්නේ ද නැද්ද යන්න පිළිබඳ සලකාබැලිය හැකිය. මා ඔබ සම්බන්ධකළ පසුව ඔබ සම්මුඛ සාකච්ඡාව සඳහා කැමතිවන්නේම් ඔබගේ කාර්යාලයේ දී හමුවීමට ඔබට පහසු දිනයක් සහ වේලාවක් තීරණය කරයි.

**ඔබට මෙම පර්යේෂණයේ ප්‍රතිඵල පිළිබඳව පසු ප්‍රතිචාර ලැබේද?**

මෙම පර්යේෂණයේ ප්‍රතිඵල පාදක කරගනිමින් ශාස්ත්‍රීය ප්‍රකාශන පළකිරීමත් සහ ඒවා සමුලවල ඉදිරිපත් කිරීමත් සිදුවේ. එසේම මෙම පර්යේෂණයේ සොයාගැනීම් අප පර්යේෂණ ආයතනයේ වෙබ් අඩවියේ [www.nztri.org](http://www.nztri.org) ද ප්‍රකාශකිරීමට නියමිතය.

**ඔබට මෙම පර්යේෂණය පිළිබඳ කරුණු සලකාබැලීමට අවශ්‍ය නම් කුමක් කළයුතුද?**

මෙම පර්යේෂණය පිළිබඳ සැලකිලිමත්වන ඔබ ප්‍රථමයෙන්ම ඒ පිළිබඳ දත්ත සිටියයුත්තේ පර්යේෂණ ව්‍යාපෘතියේ උපදේශක මහාචාර්ය සයිමන් මිල්න් ය. දුර: +64 992 19245 දිගුව: 9876, ඊමේල්: [simon.milne@aut.ac.nz](mailto:simon.milne@aut.ac.nz)

මෙම පර්යේෂණය ක්‍රියාත්මකවන ආකාරය පිළිබඳ සැලකිලිමත්වන ඔබ AUTECH හි සභාපතිනිය වන කේට් ඕකොනර් සම්බන්ධ කරගතයුතුය. දුර: +64 921 9999, දිගුව: 6038, ඊමේල්: [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz)

ඔබට මෙම පර්යේෂණය පිළිබඳ තවදුරටත් තොරතුරු අවශ්‍ය නම් සම්බන්ධ කරගතයුත්තේ කවුද?

දිනේෂා සේනාරත්න, දුර: +64 921 9999, දිගුව: 8890 හෝ +94 71 2283806, ඊමේල්: [dsenarat@aut.ac.nz](mailto:dsenarat@aut.ac.nz)

**පර්යේෂකයා සම්බන්ධකරගැනීමට තොරතුරු**

දිනේෂා සේනාරත්න, නවසීලන්ත සංචාරක පර්යේෂණ ආයතනය (NZTRI), සංස්කෘතික සහ සමාජීය පීඨය, ඔක්ලන්ඩ් තාක්ෂණික විශ්වවිද්‍යාලයේ (AUT), පෞද්ගලික බැගය 92006, ඔක්ලන්ඩ් 1020, නවසීලන්තය. දුර: +64 921 9999, දිගුව: 8890 හෝ +94 71 2283806, ඊමේල්: [dsenarat@aut.ac.nz](mailto:dsenarat@aut.ac.nz)

**ව්‍යාපෘති උපදේශක සම්බන්ධකරගැනීමට තොරතුරු**

මහාචාර්ය සයිමන් මිල්නේ, අධ්‍යක්ෂක, නවසීලන්ත සංචාරක පර්යේෂණ ආයතනය (NZTRI), සංස්කෘතික සහ සමාජීය පීඨය, ඔක්ලන්ඩ් තාක්ෂණික විශ්වවිද්‍යාලයේ (AUT), පෞද්ගලික බැගය 92006, ඔක්ලන්ඩ් 1020, නවසීලන්තය. දුර: +64 992 19245 දිගුව: 9876, ඊමේල්: [simon.milne@aut.ac.nz](mailto:simon.milne@aut.ac.nz)

*ඔක්ලන්ඩ් තාක්ෂණික විශ්වවිද්‍යාලයේ සදාචාර කමිටුව (AUTEC) විසින් අනුමත කළ දිනය 18/ජූලි/2019, AUTEC විමර්ශන අංකය 19/159*

## Appendix 10: Consent Form for the semi-structured interviews – Sinhalese

අර්ධ-ව්‍යුහගත සම්මුඛ සාකච්ඡා සඳහා - ප්‍රධාන පාර්ශවකරුවන්

### කැමැත්ත ප්‍රකාශකිරීමේ පෙරරමය

ව්‍යාපෘති මාතෘකාව: ප්‍රජා සංවර්ධනය සඳහා රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණය කළමනාකරණය: ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ රුහුණ ජාතික වනෝද්‍යානය (යාල) ඇසුරින්.

උපදේශක: මහාචාර්ය සයිමන් මිල්න්

පර්යේෂක: දිනේෂා සේනාරත්න

- ☐ 03/05/2019 දිනැති තොරතුරු පත්‍රිකාව කියවා ඉහත පර්යේෂණ ව්‍යාපෘතිය සම්බන්ධ විස්තර මාවිසින් අවබෝධකරගතිමි.
- ☐ මාහට ප්‍රශ්න ඇසීමටත් ඒ සඳහා පිළිතුරු ලබාගැනීමටත් අවස්ථාව ලැබුණි.
- ☐ සහභාගිවන්නන් වයස අවුරුදු 18ට වැඩිවිය යුතු බව මම දනිමි.
- ☐ සම්මුඛ සාකච්ඡාව අතරතුර සටහන් ලබාගන්නා බවත් හඬපටිගතකරණයකර ඒවා පිටපත් පකසන බවත් මම දනිමි.
- ☐ මෙම පර්යේෂණයට සහභාගිවිය යුත්තේ ස්වේච්ඡාවෙන් බවත් කිසිදු අවාසි සහගත තත්ත්වයකට බඳුන් නොවී මට මෙම පර්යේෂණයෙන් ඕනෑම මොහොතක ඉවත්විය හැකි බවත් මම දනිමි.
- ☐ මම මෙම පර්යේෂණයෙන් අස්වීමට තීරණය කළහොත් මගේ සම්මුඛ සාකච්ඡාවට අදාළ පිටපත් හා හඬපට සියලු දත්ත විනාශ කරන බව මම දනිමි. එසේ වුවත් පර්යේෂණයේ සොයාගැනීම් සිදුකිරීම් අවසන් වූ පසුව මගේ තොරතුරු ඉවත්කිරීමට නොහැකි බවත් දනිමි.
- ☐ මෙම පර්යේෂණයට සහභාගිවීමට කැමැත්ත ප්‍රකාශකර සිටිමි.
- ☐ මම මෙම පර්යේෂණයේ සාරාංශ වාර්තාවක් ලබාගැනීමට කැමැත්තෙමි (කරුණාකර 'හරි' ලකුණ යොදන්න). ☐ **ඔව්** ☐ **නැහැ**

සහභාගිවන්නාගේ අත්සන: .....

සහභාගිවන්නාගේ නම: .....

සහභාගිවන්නා සම්බන්ධකරගැනීමට තොරතුරු:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

දිනය: ...../...../.....

සටහන: සහභාගිවන්නා විසින් මෙය සම්පූර්ණකර පර්යේෂකයා වෙත ලබාදිය යුතුය

## Appendix 11: Semi-structured Interview Guide – Sinhalese

### අර්ධ-ව්‍යුහගත සම්මුඛ සාකච්ඡාවට මගපෙන්වුම - ප්‍රධාන පාර්ශවකරුවන්

ව්‍යාපෘති මාතෘකාව: ප්‍රජා සංවර්ධනය සඳහා රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණය කළමනාකරණය: ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ රුහුණ ජාතික වනෝද්‍යානය (යාල) ඇසුරින්.

දත්ත රැස්කිරීම අධියර I: මෙම අධියර සකස්කර ඇත්තේ රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණයට සම්බන්ධ ප්‍රධාන පාර්ශවකරුවන් අතර පවතින සම්බන්ධතාව හඳුනාගැනීමෙන් පළමු විශේෂිත අරමුණට පිළිතුරු සැපයීමටයි.

- පාර්ශවකරුවන් සංචාරක කර්මාන්තයට දායකවන ආකාරය සහ ඔවුන් රණකෙළිය සම්පත්/වත්කම් අතර පවත්වන සම්බන්ධතා හඳුනාගැනීම.
- රණකෙළිය ප්‍රජාව රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණයට සහභාගිවීම පිළිබඳ ඔවුන්ගේ ආකල්ප සහ පාර්ශවකරුවන් අතර බලය සංසරණයවන ආකාරය අවබෝධකරගැනීම.

සාකච්ඡාවේ සැකැස්ම	ප්‍රශ්න ඇසීමට යෝග්‍ය වපසරිය	කාලය
හැඳින්වීම	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• පළාත් පාලන නිලධාරීන් සහ විශේෂඥයන් සමඟ සුහදකාව ඇතිකරගැනීම.</li> <li>• පර්යේෂණය සහ එහි අරමුණ පිළිබඳ කෙටියෙන් හඳුන්වාදීම.</li> </ul>	5'
පසුබිම	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ඔබ සේවයකරන ස්ථානය/ආයතනය පිළිබඳ විස්තරකරන්න: එය රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණයට සම්බන්ධවන්නේ කෙසේද?</li> <li>• ඔබ මෙම ආයතනයට කොපමණ කාලයක් තිස්සේ සේවයකරයිද?</li> <li>• ඔබට මෙම ක්ෂේත්‍රය පිළිබඳ මොනආකාරයේ පළපුරුද්දක් තිබේද?</li> </ul>	5'
පාර්ශවකරුවන්ගේ සම්බන්ධතා	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණයට සම්බන්ධ ප්‍රධාන පාර්ශවකරුවන් කවුද? එම පාර්ශවකරුවන්ගෙන් කීදෙනෙක් රණකෙළිය ප්‍රජාව සමඟ සෘජුව සම්බන්ධකම් පවත්වයිද?</li> <li>• ඔබ ආයතනය ඉහත සඳහන් සම්පත් හුවමාරුකරගැනීමේ කුමන භූමිකාවක නිරතවන්නේද?</li> <li>• ඔබ ආයතනය සහ වෙනත් පාර්ශවකරුවන් අතර පවතින මෙම සබඳතා හොඳින් සිදුවේයැයි ඔබ සිතනවාද? ඔව් නම්, ඒ ඇයි? නැති නම්, ඒ ඇයි?</li> </ul>	10'
ප්‍රජා සම්පත්/වත්කම්	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• රණකෙළියහි කුමන සම්පත්/වත්කම් රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණයේදී භාවිත වන්නේද? (උදා: මානව, සමාජීය, දේශපාලන, සංස්කෘතික, මූල්‍යමය, භෞතික සහ ස්වභාවික).</li> <li>• රණකෙළිය ප්‍රජාව එම සම්පත්/වත්කම් යාල රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරක කර්මාන්තයේ සංවර්ධනයට උපයෝජනයකර ඇත්තේ කෙසේද?</li> <li>• ඔබ ආයතනය යාල රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරක කර්මාන්ත වෙනුවෙන් එම රණකෙළිය සම්පත් වෙත ළඟාවන්නේ කෙසේද?</li> <li>• මෙම රණකෙළිය සම්පත්වෙත භාවිත කිරීමේදී රණකෙළිය ප්‍රජාව සහ පාර්ශවකරුවන් අතර ගැටුම් ඇතිවේද? ඔව් නම්, එම ගැටුම්වල ස්වභාවය විස්තර කරන්න. නැති නම්, ගැටුම් අවම වීමට හේතු දක්වන්න.</li> </ul>	10'
බලය සංසරණය	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• රණකෙළිය සම්පත් භාවිත කිරීමේදී මොන මොන පාර්ශවකරුවන් ද වඩාත් ප්‍රභල හෝ දුබල භූමිකාවක් ගන්නේ? කොහොමද ඔවුන් ඒවා කළමනාකරණය කරන්නේ? ඔබ ඔබේ ආයතනය ඔවුන් අතර ස්ථානගතකරන්නේ කෙසේද?</li> <li>• ඔබ ආයතනය රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණයේ ප්‍රතිලාභ බෙදාහරින්නේ කෙසේද? (රණකෙළිය ප්‍රජාව ප්‍රතිලාභ ලබයිද? ඔව් නම්, ඒ කෙසේද? උදා: රැකියා අවස්ථා සහ යටිතල පහසුකම්)</li> <li>• රණකෙළිය ප්‍රජාව සහ පාර්ශවකරුවන් අතර යාල රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණය ජනනය කරන ප්‍රතිලාභ බෙදාගැනීම වෙනුවෙන් කිසියම් ගැටුමක් පවතීද? ඔව් නම්, එම ගැටුමේ ස්වභාවය විස්තර කිරීමට පුළුවන්ද? නැති නම්, එවැනි ගැටුමක් නොමැතිවීමට හේතුවොනවාද?</li> </ul>	10'
වෙනත් අදහස්	ඔබට වෙනත් අදහස් තිබේද?	5'

සමාප්තිය	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>මෙම පර්යේෂණයට සහභාගිවන්නට, ආයතන සහ පාර්ශවකරුවන් ගේ පෞද්ගලිකත්වය සහ අනන්‍යතාවල රහසිගත භාවය ආරක්ෂාකරනබව අවධාරණයකරන්න.</li> <li>කියවා බලා එහි පැහැදිලිතාව සහ නිවැරදි බව තහවුරුකිරීමට සටහන් හෝ සම්මුඛ සාකච්ඡාවේ පිටපත එවියයුතු ආකාරය අසන්න.</li> <li>සහභාගිත්වය පිළිබඳ ස්තූතිකරන්න.</li> </ul>	5'
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“පාර්ශවකරුවෙක් හඳුනාගතහැක්කේ නිශ්චිත ප්‍රදේශයක පවතින සංචාරක කටයුතුවලින්/වලට බලපෑමක් කළහැකි හෝ බලපෑමකට ලක්වියහැකි ඕනෑම කණ්ඩායමක් හෝ පුද්ගලයෙක්” (Freeman, 1984, p. 46).

“ප්‍රජා සම්පත් යනු අලුත් සම්පත් නිර්මාණයකිරීම සඳහා භාවිතයට ගතහැකි, ආයෝජනය කළහැකි හෝ හුවමාරු කළහැකි සම්පත්/වත්කම්” වේ (Flora, Flora & Fey, 2004, p.1).

## **Appendix 12: Participant Information Sheet for the participatory mapping exercises – Ranakeliya community**

### **Date Information Sheet Produced:**

03/ May /2019

### **Project Title**

*Managing Protected Area (PA) Tourism and Community Development: the Case of Ruhuna National Park (Yala), Sri Lanka.*

### **An Invitation**

My name is Dinesha Senarathna. I am a PhD student from New Zealand Tourism Research Institute (NZTRI), School of Hospitality of Tourism, Faculty of Culture and Society, Auckland University of Technology (AUT), New Zealand. My supervisor is Professor Simon Milne, the Director of the NZTRI. I would be grateful if you could participate in my doctoral research project on Protected Area (PA) tourism and sustainable community development in Yala. The research will examine the links between tourism, PA, and sustainable community development by engaging with a range of key stakeholder groups and the community. As you are part of the local community in Ranakeliya you are invited to participate in this research and your involvement is greatly appreciated.

### **What is the purpose of this research?**

This research aims to understand how national park focused tourism can be managed to generate sustainable community development and, in turn, influence the willingness of communities to embrace conservation efforts and support parks' broader environmental and societal goals. This research will provide information to improve national park conservation policy and increase PA-related sustainable community benefits in Sri Lanka and other developing countries. The findings of this research will be used only for the academic purposes such as publishing in journal articles and conference proceedings.

### **How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?**

You have been identified and selected through the face-to-face questionnaire survey conducted in an earlier stage of the fieldwork for this research. Your participation for this research is entirely voluntary.

### **How do I agree to participate in this research?**

To participate in this research, simply confirm an appointment time by return email or telephone. I will also ask you to sign a Consent Form (copy attached) that gives me your written consent to participate in the participatory mapping exercises. Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether or not you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You are able to withdraw from the study at any time. If you withdraw from the study, please know that all relevant information including tapes and transcripts, or parts will be destroyed. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.

### **What will happen in this research?**

You are being invited to participate in the second phase of this study for participatory mapping exercises. I will ask you to determine the spatial information about tourism-related economic activities; places where the local community interact with PA tourism

businesses. You will also be asked to mark the locations on the aerial photograph where the issues/conflicts take place amongst the park, tourists, private operators and local community. The participatory mapping exercises will be conducted and audio recorded with your permission, indicated by signing the Consent Form. Your participation is valuable to this research as it helps to generate the local knowledge on PA tourism in Yala

**What are the discomforts and risks?**

The participatory mapping exercises will take approximately 60 minutes of your time. You are giving your valuable time and information to help with this research and I can assure you that I have considered your well-being. You may feel nervous about taking part in the participatory mapping exercises and also having your audio recorded. The information you provide will be treated with confidentiality and will only be viewed by the researcher and her supervisors.

**How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?**

Participation is voluntary and all questions are optional -you may choose not to answer some questions. The participatory mapping exercises is designed to gain an understanding of the impacts of PA tourism practices in Yala on local community so there are no right or wrong answers. Any information you provide will be interesting. The researcher is strictly bounded by her University ethics procedures and processes and will not pass on any information to others.

**What are the benefits?**

Researchers who are looking for new insights into PA tourism will benefit from the work. The thesis will also assist key stakeholders such as PA tourism practitioners, local authorities, policy makers (e.g. Departments of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism in Sri Lanka and other developing countries) and proximate communities of PA by providing practical guidance to develop the evidence-based tourism approaches and strategies.

This research will help me to widen the knowledge on PA tourism and community development in my country setting. It also help to complete my Ph.D. degree and fulfil the requirements of my academic career. I may use this research for academic publications and presentations in the future.

**How will my privacy be protected?**

All answers are confidential and will not be linked to your personal information. The information you have provided will be confidential and not distributed to anyone other than the researcher and her supervisors. The field data collected through various methods (semi-structured interviews, face-to-face questionnaire survey and participatory mapping exercises) will be combined during the data analysis process and individual or organisational identity will not be presented in the findings.

**What are the costs of participating in this research?**

The only cost to participate will be your time – approximately 60 minutes. To thank you for your participation, I will present a small souvenir from New Zealand at the end of the interview.

**What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?**

The participatory mapping exercises will be set up approximately two weeks before it is conducted. You can consider your participation during this time. I will contact you to see if you would like to be interviewed and if so, to make an appointment to visit you at your place at a time that suits you. The answers will be audio recorded and the map you created during this exercise will be taken/photographed but only with your written consent.



**Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?**

The findings of this research may be used in presentations and publications with an academic context. The results of this research will also be available on our institute website [www.nztri.org](http://www.nztri.org). I will present my thesis findings to the community of Ranakeliya, most likely in the format of a simple presentation and workshop after the thesis is completed.

**What do I do if I have concerns about this research?**

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor,

Professor Simon Milne, Tel: + 64 992 19245 ext. 9876, Email [simon.milne@aut.ac.nz](mailto:simon.milne@aut.ac.nz)

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTECH, Kate O'Connor, [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz), 921 9999 ext. 6038.

**Whom do I contact for further information about this research?**

Dinesha Senarathna, Tel: +64 921 9999 ext. 8890 or +94 71 2283806 Email: [dsenarat@aut.ac.nz](mailto:dsenarat@aut.ac.nz)

**Researcher Contact Details:**

Dinesha Senarathna, New Zealand Tourism Research Institute, Faculty of Society and Culture, Auckland University of Technology, Private Bag 92006, Auckland 1020, New Zealand

Tel: +64 921 9999 ext. 8890 or +94 71 2283806, Email: [dsenarat@aut.ac.nz](mailto:dsenarat@aut.ac.nz)

**Project Supervisor Contact Details:**

Professor Simon Milne, Director of New Zealand Tourism Research Institute, Faculty of Society and Culture,

Auckland University of Technology, Private Bag 92006, Auckland 1020, New Zealand

Tel: + 64 992 19245 ext. 9876,

Email [simon.milne@aut.ac.nz](mailto:simon.milne@aut.ac.nz)

*Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 18/July/ 2019, AUTECH Reference number 19/159.*

## Appendix 13: Consent Form for the participatory mapping exercises – Ranakeliya community

### Consent Form

**Project title:** *Managing Protected Area (PA) Tourism and Community Development: the Case of Ruhuna National Park (Yala), Sri Lanka.*

**Project Supervisor:** *Professor Simon Milne*

**Researcher:** *Dinesha Senarathna*

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 03/ May /2019
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered. I am over the age of 18.
- ☐ I understand that the map created will be taken/photographed during the participatory mapping exercises and the interview will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- ☐ I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ If I withdraw from the study, I understand that all relevant information including tapes and transcripts, or parts will be destroyed. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research.
- ☐ I wish to attend the workshop in which the researcher intends to present her findings to my community in Ranakeliya after the thesis is completed (please tick one): Yes ☐ No ☐

Participant's signature: .....

Participant's name: .....

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Date:

*Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form*

## Appendix 14: Participatory mapping exercises (PGIS\*) – Ranakeliya community

*Project Title: Managing Protected Area (PA) Tourism for Sustainable Community Development: the Case of Ruhuna National Park (Yala), Sri Lanka.*

**Data collection phase II:** This phase is designed to understand the community-level impacts of PA tourism using a case study approach in order to answer the second specific objective.

### Interview Purpose:

- To find out the spatial information about tourism-related economic activities: places where the local community interact with PA tourism businesses.
- To mark the locations on the aerial photograph the places where the issues/conflicts take place among the park, tourists, private operators and local community.

Interview structure	Participatory mapping exercise (PGIS) & Follow up Questions (FQ)		Time
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish the relationship with the local community participant (building on previous contact during the survey phase).</li> <li>• Give a briefing for the participatory mapping exercise: This large hardcopy of an aerial photograph covers the park and Thissamaharama Divisional Secretariat Division (DSD) and here are some places you may be familiar with. <i>(The researcher shows some land marks and features of the map to help participants gain familiarity with the aerial photographs and orient themselves. The researcher then asks the participant to identify one or two places to test their understanding of the map and what it features).</i> I will now ask you to identify a few locations which are related to PA tourism businesses, local community engagement with the park and tourism and conflicts with Yala. You will be handed 'sticky notes' in different colours to indicate these themes and their locations. Then I will then ask some follow up questions around the places where you have marked. There is no right or wrong answer. So, feel free to mark these locations and answer the questions to the best of your knowledge.</li> </ul>		15'
Economic activities	PGIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mark the locations on the aerial photograph where the local community interact with PA tourists and tourism businesses using <i>white colour</i> stick notes (e.g. safari jeep operating places, souvenir shops, B&amp;B, etc.)</li> </ul>	15'
	FQ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why did you mark these places?</li> <li>• How important do you feel these places are for PA tourism and for the local community?</li> <li>• What kind of interactions do you and the local community have with PA tourism in these places? (e.g. as service providers, sellers, etc.)</li> <li>• Do you think that these places provide tourism benefits to your community? And to you personally. If YES, how does it provide benefits?</li> </ul>	
Conflicts	PGIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mark the locations on the aerial photograph where the issues/conflicts take place, if any, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Between Yala and the local community using <i>green colour</i> stick notes (e.g. wildlife attacks)</li> <li>- Between tourists and local community using <i>blue colour</i> stick notes (e.g. disturbing daily life)</li> <li>- Between private operators and local community using <i>red colour</i> stick notes (e.g. conflicts over resources)</li> <li>- Between/within communities (e.g. within the Ranakeliya community, and with other communities, etc.) using <i>yellow colour</i> stick notes</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	20'

	FQ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why did you mark these places? (e.g. reasons)</li> <li>• Do you have any direct experience of these issues/conflicts? If YES, describe them.</li> <li>• What do you believe are the reasons for these issues/conflicts?</li> <li>• Who do you feel are the responsible parties for these issues/conflicts?</li> <li>• How do you think these issues/conflicts could be resolved?</li> </ul>	
<b>Other comments</b>	Do you have any further comments or insights you would like to contribute?		5'
<b>Wrap up</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-emphasise that the research will ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants.</li> <li>• Ask if and how they wish to receive the notes/interview transcript to review to ensure the accuracy of the information.</li> <li>• Thank them for their participation.</li> </ul>		5'

\* Participatory Geographical Information System (PGIS) is a combined method of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and Geographical Information System (GIS). Participatory mapping exercise is used for the data collection in PGIS.

## Appendix 15: Participant Information Sheet for the participatory mapping exercises – Sinhalese

සහභාගීත්ව සිතියම් අභ්‍යාස සඳහා සහභාගීත්ව තොරතුරු පත්‍රිකාව - රණකෙළිය ග්‍රාමීය ජනතාව  
දත්ත පත්‍රිකාව සකස්කළ දිනය  
03/05/2019

ව්‍යාපෘති මාතෘකාව

ප්‍රජා සංවර්ධනය සඳහා රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණය කළමනාකරණය ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ රැහුණ ජාතික  
වනෝද්‍යානය (යාල) ඇසුරින්

ආරාධනය

මගේ නම දිනේෂා සේනාරත්න යි. මා නවසීලන්තයේ, ඔක්ලන්ඩ් තාක්ෂණික විශ්වවිද්‍යාලයේ (AUT), සන්නායක හා සංචාරක පාසලේ, නවසීලන්ත සංචාරක පර්යේෂණ ආයතනය (NZTRI) හි පශ්චාත් උපාධි (Ph.D.) අපේක්ෂිකාවකි. මගේ පර්යේෂණයේ උපදේශකත්වය දරන්නේ NZTRI හි අධ්‍යක්ෂක මහාචාර්ය සයිමන් මිල්න් ය. මෙම පර්යේෂණය සංචාරණය, රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සහ ප්‍රජා සංවර්ධනය යන අංශයන්ගේ සම්බන්ධතාවය ප්‍රධාන පාර්ශ්වකරුවන්ගේ දායකත්වය ඇසුරින් අධ්‍යයනය කිරීම අපේක්ෂා කරයි. ඔබත් මෙම ප්‍රධාන පාර්ශ්වකරුවකුවක් බැවින් මෙම පර්යේෂණයට සහභාගි වීම සඳහා ආරාධනා කෙරෙන අතර ඔබගේ දායකත්වය ඉතා ඉහළින් අගය කර සිටිමි. එසේම ඔබගේ සහභාගිවීම වෙනුවෙන් කෘතඥ වෙමි.

මෙම පර්යේෂණයේ අරමුණ

ජාතික වනෝද්‍යාන සංචාරණය තිරසාර ප්‍රජා සංවර්ධනය සඳහා යොදාගැනීමත් එහි ප්‍රතිඵලයක් ලෙස එම ප්‍රජාව එම වනෝද්‍යාන සංරක්ෂණයට දායක කරගතහැක්කේ කෙසේද යන්නත් අධ්‍යයනය අරමුණු කෙරේ. එසේම මෙම පර්යේෂණය ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ සහ අනෙකුත් සංවර්ධනයවන රටවල වනෝද්‍යාන සංරක්ෂණ ප්‍රතිපත්ති සකස්කිරීමට සහ රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ යොදාගනිමින් තිරසාර ලෙස ප්‍රජාව වෙත ප්‍රතිලාභ සැපයීමට අවශ්‍ය දැනුම නිෂ්පාදනය කරයි. මෙම පර්යේෂණයේ සොයාගනු ලබන දත්ත පර්යේෂණය ලිපි සම්පාදනය සහ සමුළුවල ඉදිරිපත් කිරීම වැනි අධ්‍යයන කටයුතු සඳහා පමණක් ම භාවිත කෙරේ.

ඔබ මෙම පර්යේෂණය සඳහා තෝරාගැනීම සහ ආරාධනය

ඔබ මෙම පර්යේෂණය සඳහා හඳුනාගැනීම සහ තෝරාගැනීමට මීට පෙර ඔබ සමඟ සිදුකළ මුහුණට මුහුණ සම්මුඛ සාකච්ඡා උපකාර විය. රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ, සංචාරණය සහ ප්‍රජා සංවර්ධනය සම්බන්ධව නිපුණත්වයක් දක්වන යාල වනෝද්‍යානයේ නිලධාරීන් සහ මාර්ගෝපදේශකවරුන්, තිස්සමහාරාම ප්‍රාදේශීය ලේකම් කාර්යාලයේ පරිපාලන නිලධාරීන්, පෞද්ගලික වාරිකා සංවිධායකයින් සහ හෝටල් අයිතිකරුවන්, ග්‍රාම නිලධාරී සහ රණකෙළිය ග්‍රාමීය ජනතාව මෙම පර්යේෂණයට සහභාගිවීමට ආරාධනා ලබයි. මෙම පර්යේෂණයට ඔබේ සහභාගීත්වය සහමුලින්ම ස්වේච්ඡා සහගතයි.

ඔබ මෙම පර්යේෂණයට සහභාගිවීමට කැමැත්ත පළකළකරන්නේ කෙසේද?

මෙම පර්යේෂණයට ඔබ සහභාගි කරගැනීම සඳහා මා ඔබ ඊමේල් හෝ දුරකථනයෙන් සම්බන්ධකරගත් පසුව සහභාගීත්ව සිතියම් අභ්‍යාස සඳහා වේලාව තහවුරු කරන්න. එසේම මා ඔබට මේ සමඟ එවන පර්යේෂණයට සහභාගිවීමට කැමැත්ත පළකරන පෝරමය අත්සන්කර මා හට ලබා දෙන්න. ඔබ මෙම පර්යේෂණයට සහභාගිවිය යුත්තේ ස්වේච්ඡාවෙනි. මෙම පර්යේෂණයට සහභාගිවීමෙන් ඔබට විශේෂ වාසියක් හෝ සහභාගිනොවීමෙන් පාඩුවක් නොවේ. ඔබට කැමති මොහොතක මෙම පර්යේෂණයෙන් අස්වීමට පුළුවන. ඔබ පර්යේෂණයෙන් අස්වීමට තීරණය කළහොත් ඔබේ සම්මුඛ සාකච්ඡාවට අදාළ පිටපත් හා හඬපට සියලු දත්ත විනාශ කරයි. එසේ වුවත් පර්යේෂණයේ සොයාගැනීම් සිදුකිරීම් අවසන්වූ පසුව ඔබේ තොරතුරු ඉවත්කිරීමට නොහැක.

මෙම පර්යේෂණයේ දී සිදුවන්නේ කුමක්ද?

මෙම පර්යේෂණය සංචාරණය, රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සහ ප්‍රජා සංවර්ධනය යන අංශයන්ගේ සම්බන්ධතාවය ප්‍රධාන පාර්ශ්වකරුවන්ගේ දායකත්වය ඇසුරින් අධ්‍යයනය කිරීම අපේක්ෂා කරයි. මෙම පර්යේෂණයේ ක්ෂේත්‍ර වැඩ යාල, තිස්සමහාරාම සහ රණකෙළිය ආශ්‍රිතව සිදුකිරීමට මාස තුනක පමණ කාලයක් ගතවේ. ක්ෂේත්‍ර වැඩ අධීයර දෙකකින් සමන්විතය. දෙවන අධීයර පළමු අධීයර අවසානයේ ආරම්භවේ. පළමු අධීයරේදී රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණයේ ප්‍රධාන පාර්ශ්වකරුවන් සමඟ අර්ධ-ව්‍යුහගත සම්මුඛ සාකච්ඡා සිදුකෙරේ. දෙවන අධීයර රණකෙළිය

ග්‍රාමීය ජනතාව සමඟ මුහුණට මුහුණලා කෙරෙන ප්‍රශ්නාවලි සමීක්ෂණයක් සහ සහභාගීත්ව සිතියම් අභ්‍යාසයක් යන දත්ත රැස්කිරීමේ ක්‍රම දෙකකින් සමන්විතය. ඔබ සහභාගී වන්නේ මෙම පර්යේෂණයේ දෙවන අධියරේ සහභාගීත්ව සිතියම් අභ්‍යාසයටය. සංචාරක ව්‍යාපාරය ආශ්‍රිත ආර්ථික ක්‍රියාකාරකම්වල අවකාශීය තොරතුරු හඳුනාගැනීමට උදා: ග්‍රාමීය ප්‍රජාව රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ ආශ්‍රිත සංචාරක ව්‍යාපාර හා සම්බන්ධවෙන ස්ථාන මම ඔබගෙන් ඉල්ලාසිටිමි. එසේම ඔබවෙත සපයාදෙන ගුවන්ඡායාරූපය මත වනෝද්‍යානය, සංචාරකයින්, පුද්ගලික අංශ සහ ග්‍රාමීය ප්‍රජාව අතර ගැටළු උද්ගතව පවතින ස්ථාන හඳුනාගැනීමට ඔබෙන් විමසනු ඇති. මෙම සහභාගීත්ව සිතියම් අභ්‍යාසය පැවැත්වීමත් සම්මුඛ සාකච්ඡාව හඬපටිගතකරණය කරනුයේත් ඔබගේ අවසරය මතය. එකඟත්වය පළකරන පෝරමය අත්සන්කරීමෙන් මෙම පර්යේෂණයට සහභාගීවීම සහ සම්මුඛ සාකච්ඡාව හඬපටිගතකරණයට ඔබගේ අවසරය ලබාදිය හැකිය. මෙම පර්යේෂණයට සහභාගීවීම ඉතා අගය කොට සළකනුයේ එය යාල රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණය පිළිබඳ දේශීය දැනුම නිෂ්පාදනයට උපකාර වන බැවිනි.

**උද්ගතවියහැකි අපහසුතා සහ අවදානම් තත්ව**

මෙම සහභාගීත්ව සිතියම් අභ්‍යාසය ආසන්න වශයෙන් මිනිත්තු 60ක් ගතවේ. මේ සඳහා ඔබ ඔබගේ වටිනා කාලය හා තොරතුරු ලබාදෙන අතර සිතියම් අභ්‍යාසය අතරතුර මට ඔබගේ සුවපහසුව තහවුරු කළ හැකිය. නමුත් ඔබ ඇතැම් විටෙක සිතියම් අභ්‍යාසය සහ සම්මුඛ සාකච්ඡාවට භාජනය වීම නිසා හෝ එය හඬපටිගතකරණය කිරීම නිසා තරමක නොසන්සුන් තත්වයකට පත්වියහැකිය. ඒ කෙසේ වෙතත්, ඔබ පිළිතුරු දීමට අපහසු හෝ ඔබට දැනීමක් නොමැති ඕනෑම ප්‍රශ්නයකට පිළිතුරු නොදී සිටීමේ නිදහස පවතී. ඔබ ලබාදෙන දත්තවල රහස්‍යභාවය සුරක්ෂිත කරනුලබන අතර එවා දකින්නේ පර්යේෂණකරු වන මා හා මගේ උපදේශකවරුන් පමණි.

**අපහසුතා සහ අවදානම් තත්ව වලක්වන්නේ කෙසේද?**

ඔබට ඇතැම් ප්‍රශ්නවලට පිළිතුරු ලබානොදී සිටිය හැකිය. මෙම සිතියම් අභ්‍යාසය සහභාගීවීම සහ පිළිතුරු ලබාදීම සහමුලින්ම ස්වකැමැත්තවේ. මෙම සිතියම් අභ්‍යාසය සකස්කර තිබෙන්නේ යාල රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණයේ ප්‍රතිඵලයක් ලෙස ග්‍රාමීය ප්‍රජාවට බලපාඇති ආකාරය අවබෝධකරගැනීමටයි. මෙහිසා කිසිදු ප්‍රශ්නයකට හරි හෝ වැරදි කියා නිශ්චිත පිළිතුරක් නොමැත. ඔබ ලබාදෙන ඕනෑම පිළිතුරක් මෙම පර්යේෂණයට උපකාර වියහැකිය. මා 'ඔබ විශ්වවිද්‍යාලයේ සඳාචාර ප්‍රතිපත්තින්ට සහ ක්‍රමවේදයන්ට අනුකූලව කටයුතු කිරීමට තදින්ම බැඳී සිටින බැවින් කිසිම තොරතුරක් බාහිර පුද්ගලයෙකුට ලබා නොදීමට බැඳී සිටිමි.

**මෙම පර්යේෂණයෙහි ප්‍රතිලාභ මොනවාද?**

මෙම පර්යේෂණය රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණය පිළිබඳ නව දර්ශනයක් සොයන ශාස්ත්‍රීය ප්‍රජාවට උපකාර වේ. එසේම මෙම පර්යේෂණ නිබන්ධනය රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණය ආශ්‍රිත කර්මාන්තයේ යෙදෙන්නන්ට, පළාත් පාලන අධිකාරීන්ට, ප්‍රතිපත්ති සකසන්නන්ට (උදා: වන ජීවී දෙපාර්තමේන්තුව, සංචාරක අධිකාරිය සහ වෙනත් සංවර්ධනය වන රට වලට) සහ රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ ආශ්‍රිත ජනතාවට උපායමාර්ග සහ සාදක මත පදනම් වූ ප්‍රවේශයන් සංවර්ධනය කිරීමට ප්‍රායෝගික මගපෙන්වීමක් ලබාදෙයි. මෙම පර්යේෂණය මාගේ රටෙහි රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණය සහ ප්‍රජා සංවර්ධනය පිළිබඳ දැනුම වර්ධනයට උපකාර වේ. එසේම එය මගේ ජයගෘහ උපාධිය සම්පූර්ණ කිරීමෙන් මගේ ශාස්ත්‍රීය වෘත්තියෙහි අවශ්‍යතාව සඵල කෙරේ. තවද අනාගතයේ දී මම මෙම පර්යේෂණය පාදක කරගනිමින් ශාස්ත්‍රීය ප්‍රකාශන සහ සමුළුවල ඉදිරිපත් කිරීමට ද බලාපොරොත්තු වේ.

**ඔබේ පෞද්ගලිකත්වය ආරක්ෂාවන්නේ කෙසේද?**

සියලුම පිළිතුරු අතිශය රහසිගත අතර ඔබගේ කිසිම පෞද්ගලික තොරතුරකට සම්බන්ධ නොවේ. ඔබ සපයන තොරතුරු සියල්ලෙහිම රහස්‍ය භාවය සුක්ෂිප්ත කරන අතර පර්යේෂකයා හා උපදේශනවරු හැරුනකොට වෙනත් කිසිවකුවෙත ලබානොදේ. විවිධ ක්‍රමවේද භාවිකයෙන් එක්රැස්කරන ලද ක්ෂේත්‍රීය තොරතුරු දත්ත විශ්ලේෂණයේ දී සම්පීණ්ඩනය කරනුලබන අතර පෞද්ගලික හෝ ආයතනික අනන්‍යතා පර්යේෂණ සොයාගැනීම් හි ඉදිරිපත් නොවේ.

**මෙම පර්යේෂණයට සහභාගීවීම සඳහා ඔබට වැයවන්නේ මොනවාද?**

ඔබට වැයවන එකමදේ වන්නේ ඔබේ කාලයයි. එය ආසන්න වශයෙන් මිනිත්තු 60 අතර වේ. ඔබේ සහභාගීත්වයට ස්තූතිකිරීම සඳහා මෙම පර්යේෂණයේ සොයාගැනීම් නිබන්ධනය අවසන් කිරීමෙන් අනතුරුව මා නැවත ඔබේ ගමට පැමිණ කුඩා වැඩමුළුවක ආකාරයෙන් ඉදිරිපත් කිරීමට බලාපොරොත්තුවෙමි.

**ඔබට මෙම පර්යේෂණයට සහභාගිවීමට කෙරෙන ආරාධනය පිළිබඳ සලකා බලන්නේ කෙසේද?**  
මෙම සිතියම් අභ්‍යාසය ආසන්න වශයෙන් සති දෙකකටවත් පෙර සූදානම් කරනු ලැබේ. ඔබට මේ කාලය අතරතුර එයට සහභාගිවන්නේ ද නැද්ද යන්න පිළිබඳ සලකාබැලිය හැකිය. මා ඔබ සම්බන්ධකළ පසුව ඔබ සිතියම් අභ්‍යාසය සඳහා කැමතිවන්නේ නම් ඔබගේ නිවසේ දී හමුවීමට ඔබට පහසු දිනයක් සහ වේලාවක් තීරණය කරයි. ඔබේ ලිඛිත අනුමැතිය සහිතව සම්මුඛ සාකච්ඡාව හඬපටිගතකරන අතර ඔබ විසින් නිර්මාණය කරන සිතියම ලබාගැනීම හෝ ඡායාරූපගතකරගැනීම සිදුකෙරේ.

**ඔබට මෙම පර්යේෂණයේ ප්‍රතිඵල පිළිබඳව පසු ප්‍රතිචාර ලැබේද?**  
මෙම පර්යේෂණයේ ප්‍රතිඵල පාදක කරගනිමින් ශාස්ත්‍රීය ප්‍රකාශන පළකිරීමත් සහ ඒවා සමුදාවල ඉදිරිපත් කිරීමත් සිදුවේ. එසේම මෙම පර්යේෂණයේ සොයාගැනීම් අප පර්යේෂණ ආයතනයේ වෙබ් අඩවියේ [www.nztri.org](http://www.nztri.org) ද ප්‍රකාශකිරීමට නියමිතය.

**ඔබට මෙම පර්යේෂණය පිළිබඳ කරුණු සලකාබැලීමට අවශ්‍ය නම් කුමක් කළයුතුද?**  
මෙම පර්යේෂණය පිළිබඳ සැලකිලිමත්වන ඔබ ප්‍රථමයෙන්ම ඒ පිළිබඳ දන්වා සිටියයුත්තේ පර්යේෂණ ව්‍යාපෘතියේ උපදේශක මහාචාර්ය සයිමන් මිල්න් ය. දුර: +64 992 19245 දිගුව: 9876, ඊමේල්: [simon.milne@aut.ac.nz](mailto:simon.milne@aut.ac.nz)  
මෙම පර්යේෂණය ක්‍රියාත්මකවන ආකාරය පිළිබඳ සැලකිලිමත්වන ඔබ AUTEC හි සභාපතිනිය වන කේට් ඕකොනර් සම්බන්ධ කරගතයුතුය. දුර: +64 921 9999, දිගුව: 6038, ඊමේල්: [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz)

**ඔබට මෙම පර්යේෂණය පිළිබඳ තවදුරටත් තොරතුරු අවශ්‍ය නම් සම්බන්ධ කරගතයුත්තේ කවුද?**  
දිනේෂා සේනාරත්න, දුර: +64 921 9999, දිගුව: 8890 හෝ +94 71 2283806, ඊමේල්: [dsenarat@aut.ac.nz](mailto:dsenarat@aut.ac.nz)

**පර්යේෂකයා සම්බන්ධකරගැනීමට තොරතුරු**  
දිනේෂා සේනාරත්න, නවසීලන්ත සංචාරක පර්යේෂණ ආයතනය (NZTRI), සංස්කෘතික සහ සමාජීය පීඨය, ඔක්ලන්ඩ් තාක්ෂණික විශ්වවිද්‍යාලයේ (AUT), පෞද්ගලික බෑගය 92006, ඔක්ලන්ඩ් 1020, නවසීලන්තය. දුර: +64 921 9999, දිගුව: 8890 හෝ +94 71 2283806, ඊමේල්: [dsenarat@aut.ac.nz](mailto:dsenarat@aut.ac.nz)

**ව්‍යාපෘති උපදේශක සම්බන්ධකරගැනීමට තොරතුරු**  
මහාචාර්ය සයිමන් මිල්න්, අධ්‍යක්ෂක, නවසීලන්ත සංචාරක පර්යේෂණ ආයතනය (NZTRI), සංස්කෘතික සහ සමාජීය පීඨය, ඔක්ලන්ඩ් තාක්ෂණික විශ්වවිද්‍යාලයේ (AUT), පෞද්ගලික බෑගය 92006, ඔක්ලන්ඩ් 1020, නවසීලන්තය. දුර: +64 992 19245 දිගුව: 9876, ඊමේල්: [simon.milne@aut.ac.nz](mailto:simon.milne@aut.ac.nz)

## Appendix 16: Consent Form for the participatory mapping exercises – Sinhalese

සහභාගීත්ව සිතියම් අභ්‍යාස සඳහා - රණකෙළිය ග්‍රාමීය ජනතාව

### කැමැත්ත ප්‍රකාශකිරීමේ පෝරමය

ව්‍යාපෘති මාතෘකාව: ප්‍රජා සංවර්ධනය සඳහා රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණය කළමනාකරණය ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ රුහුණ ජාතික වනෝද්‍යානය (යාල) ඇසුරින්.

උපදේශක: මහාචාර්ය සයිමන් මිල්න්

පර්යේෂක: දිනේෂා සේනාරත්න

- ☐ 3/5/2019 දිනැති තොරතුරු පත්‍රිකාව කියවා ඉහත පර්යේෂණ ව්‍යාපෘතිය සම්බන්ධ විස්තර මාවිසින් අවබෝධකරගතිමි.
- ☐ මානව ප්‍රශ්න ඇසීමටත් ඒ සඳහා පිළිතුරු ලබාගැනීමටත් අවස්ථාව ලැබුණි.
- ☐ සහභාගිවන්නන් වයස අවුරුදු 18ට වැඩිවිය යුතු බව මම දනිමි.
- ☐ නිර්මාණය කරන ලද සිතියම පර්යේෂකයා වෙත ලබාදිය යුතු බවත් එය ඡායාරූපගතකිරීමට සහභාගීත්ව සිතියම් අභ්‍යාස අතරතුර ඉඩ දිය යුතු බවත් සම්මුඛ සාකච්ඡාව හඬපටිගතකරණයකර ඒවා පිටපත් පකසන බවත් මම දනිමි.
- ☐ මෙම පර්යේෂණයට සහභාගිවිය යුත්තේ ස්වේච්ඡාවෙන් බවත් කිසිදු අවාසි සහගත තත්ත්වයකට බඳුන් නොවී මට මෙම පර්යේෂණයෙන් ඕනෑම මොහොතක ඉවත්විය හැකි බවත් මම දනිමි.
- ☐ මම මෙම පර්යේෂණයෙන් අස්වීමට තීරණය කළහොත් මගේ සම්මුඛ සාකච්ඡාවට අදාළ පිටපත් හා හඬපට සියලු දත්ත විනාශ කරන බව මම දනිමි. එසේ වුවත් පර්යේෂණයේ සොයාගැනීම් සිදුකිරීම් අවසන් වූ පසුව මගේ තොරතුරු ඉවත්කිරීමට නොහැකි බවත් දනිමි.
- ☐ මෙම පර්යේෂණයට සහභාගිවීමට කැමැත්ත ප්‍රකාශකර සිටිමි.
- ☐ නිබන්ධනය අවසානයේ මෙම පර්යේෂණයේ සොයාගැනීම් ඉදිරිපත්කිරීමට පර්යේෂකයා විසින් රණකෙළිය ග්‍රාමීය ජනතාව වෙත පැවැත්වීමට නියමිත වැඩමුළුවට මම සහභාගිවීමට කැමැත්තෙමි (කරුණාකර 'හරි' ලකුණ යොදන්න).

ඔව්

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නැහැ

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සහභාගිවන්නාගේ අත්සන: .....

සහභාගිවන්නාගේ නම: .....

සහභාගිවන්නා සම්බන්ධකරගැනීමට තොරතුරු:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

දිනය: ...../...../.....

සටහන: සහභාගිවන්නා විසින් මෙය සම්පූර්ණකර පර්යේෂකයා වෙත ලබාදිය යුතුය



## Appendix 17: Participatory mapping exercises (PGIS) – Sinhalese

සහභාගීත්ව සිතියම් අභ්‍යාස සඳහා මගපෙන්වුම - රණකෙළිය ග්‍රාමීය ජනතාව

ව්‍යාපෘති මාතෘකාව: ප්‍රජා සංවර්ධනය සඳහා රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණය කළමනාකරණය ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ රුහුණ ජාතික වනෝද්‍යානය (යාල) ඇසුරින්.

දත්ත රැස්කිරීම අධියර II: මෙම අධියර සකස්කර ඇත්තේ රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණයේ ප්‍රජා මට්ටමේ බලපෑම් සිද්ධි අධ්‍යයනප්‍රවේශය ඇසුරින් අවබෝධකරගැනීමෙන් දෙවන විශේෂිත අරමුණට පිළිතුරු සැපයීමටයි.

- සංචාරක කර්මාන්තයට සම්බන්ධ අවකාශීය තොරතුරු සොයාබැලීමට: ග්‍රාමීය ජනතාව රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරකයින් සහ සංචාරක ව්‍යාපාරිකයන් හමුවනතැන්
- වනෝද්‍යානය, සංචාරකයින්, පෞද්ගලික අංශය සහ ග්‍රාමීය ජනතාව අතර ගැටළු හෝ ගැටුම් පවතින තැන් ගුවන් ඡායාරූපය මත සලකුණුකිරීමට

සාකච්ඡාවේ සැකැස්ම	සහභාගීත්ව සිතියම් අභ්‍යාසය (සසිඅ) සහ අනුබැඳුන ප්‍රශ්න (අප)		කාලය
හඳින්වීම	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ග්‍රාමීය ජනතාව සමඟ සමඟ සුහදකාව ඇතිකරගැනීම (සමීක්ෂණ සිදුකිරීමේ දී ඇතිකරගත් සබඳතා මත).</li> <li>සහභාගීත්ව සිතියම් අභ්‍යාසය සඳහා සාරාංශයක් සැපයීම: මෙම විශාල ගුවන් ඡායාරූපය යාල සහ තිස්ස මහාරාම ප්‍රාදේශීය ආවරණය කෙරේ. මෙම ස්ථාන ඔබ දන්නවා වියහැකියි (පර්යේෂකයා විසින් ඇතුළු භූමි ලක්ෂණ පෙන්වාදී සහභාගීවන්නන් ගුවන් ඡායාරූපයට සමීපකරයි. ඉන්පසුව ගුවන් ඡායාරූපය පිළිබඳ අවබෝධය පරීක්ෂා කිරීමට තැනක් හෝ දෙකක් හඳුනාගැනීමට කියයි). ග්‍රාමීය ජනතාව රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරකයින් සහ සංචාරක ව්‍යාපාරිකයන් හමුවනතැන් සලකුණු කරන්න පවසයි. ඔබට වර්ෂ සටහනී කොළ ලබාදී විවිධ ස්ථාන ලකුණුකිරීමට කියයි. ඉන්පසු ඔබ ලකුණුකළ ස්ථාන අරබයා අනුබැඳුන ප්‍රශ්න අසනුලැබේ. ඔබේ දැනීම පරිදි ස්ථාන සලකුණුකිරීම හා ප්‍රශ්න වලට පිළිතුරු සැපයීම නිදහසේ කරන්න.</li> </ul>		15'
ආර්ථික කටයුතු	සසිඅ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ගුවන් ඡායාරූපය මත ග්‍රාමීය ජනතාව රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරකයින් සහ සංචාරක ව්‍යාපාරිකයන් හමුවනතැන් සුදුපාට සටහන් කොළ යොදාගෙන සලකුණු කරන්න (උදා: සතාරි පීප් ක්‍රියාකරවන්නන්, සමරු නිර්මාණය කරන්නන්, නිවෙස්වල නවාතැන් දෙන්නන්)</li> </ul>	15'
	අප	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ඔබ මෙම ස්ථාන සලකුණු කළේ ඇයි? (උදා: හේතු)</li> <li>මෙම ස්ථාන රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණයට සහ ග්‍රාමීය ජනතාවට කෙතරම් වැදගත්ද?</li> <li>මෙම ස්ථානවල සිදුවන රක්ෂිතප්‍රදේශ සංචාරණය හා ග්‍රාමීය ජනතාව අතර පවතින අන්තර් සබඳතා මොනවාද? (උදා: සේවා සපයන්නන් ලෙස, වෙළෙඳන්දන්)</li> <li>ඔබ සිතන පරිදි මෙම ස්ථාන සංචාරක කර්මාන්තයේ ප්‍රතිලාභ ඔබේ ප්‍රජාවට ලබාදේද? ඔව් නම්, ප්‍රතිලාභ ලබාදෙන්නේ කෙසේද?</li> </ul>	
ගැටුම්	සසිඅ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ගුවන් ඡායාරූපය මත ගැටළු හෝ ගැටුම් ඇති නම් ඒවා සලකුණු කරන්න</li> <li>යාල සහ ග්‍රාමීය ජනතාව අතර කොළපාට සටහන් කොළ යොදාගෙන (උදා: වනසත්ව ප්‍රහාර)</li> <li>සංචාරකයින් සහ ග්‍රාමීය ජනතාව අතර නිල්පාට සටහන් කොළ යොදාගෙන (උදා: එදිනෙදා ජීවිතයට කරදරකිරීම)</li> <li>පෞද්ගලික අංශය සහ ග්‍රාමීය ජනතාව අතර රතුපාට සටහන් කොළ යොදාගෙන (උදා: ස්වභාවික සම්පත් මත)</li> <li>ග්‍රාමීය ජනතාව අතරම හෝ වෙනත් ප්‍රජාව සමඟ කහපාට සටහන් කොළ යොදාගෙන</li> </ul>	20'

	අප	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ඔබ මෙම ස්ථාන සලකුණු කලේ ඇයි? (උදා: හේතු)</li> <li>• ඔබට මෙම ගැටළු හෝ ගැටුම් සම්බන්ධව සෘජු අත්දැකීම් තිබේද? ඔව් නම්, විස්තර කරන්න.</li> <li>• මෙම ගැටළු හෝ ගැටුම්වලට හේතු ලෙස දැකින්නේ මොනවාද?</li> <li>• මෙම ගැටළු හෝ ගැටුම්වලට වගකිවයුතු කවුරුන්දැයි ඔබ සිතන්නේද?</li> <li>• ඔබ සිතන පරිදි මෙම ගැටළු හෝ ගැටුම් විසඳිය යුත්තේ කෙසේද?</li> </ul>	
වෙනත් අදහස්	ඔබට වෙනත් අදහස් තිබේද?		5'
සමාප්තිය	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• මෙම පර්යේෂණයට සහභාගිවන්නට, ආයතන සහ පාර්ශවකරුවන් ගේ පෞද්ගලිකත්වය සහ අනන්‍යතාවල රහසිගත භාවය ආරක්ෂාකරන බව අවධාරණය කරන්න.</li> <li>• කියවා බලා එහි පැහැදිලිතාව සහ නිවැරදි බව තහවුරු කිරීමට සටහන් හෝ සම්මුඛ සාකච්ඡාවේ පිටපත එවිය යුතු ආකාරය අසන්න.</li> <li>• සහභාගිත්වය පිළිබඳ ස්තූති කරන්න.</li> </ul>		5'

\* සහභාගිත්ව භූගෝලවිද්‍යා තොරතුරු පද්ධතිය (සසිඅ) සහභාගිත්ව ග්‍රාමීය ප්‍රවේශයේ (සග්‍රාප්‍ර) හා භූගෝලවිද්‍යා තොරතුරු පද්ධතිය (භූතොප) ඒකාබද්ධ කළ ක්‍රමවේදයකි. සහභාගිත්ව සිතියම් අභ්‍යාසය යොදාගන්නේ සභුතොප සඳහා දත්ත එක්රැස්කිරීමටයි.