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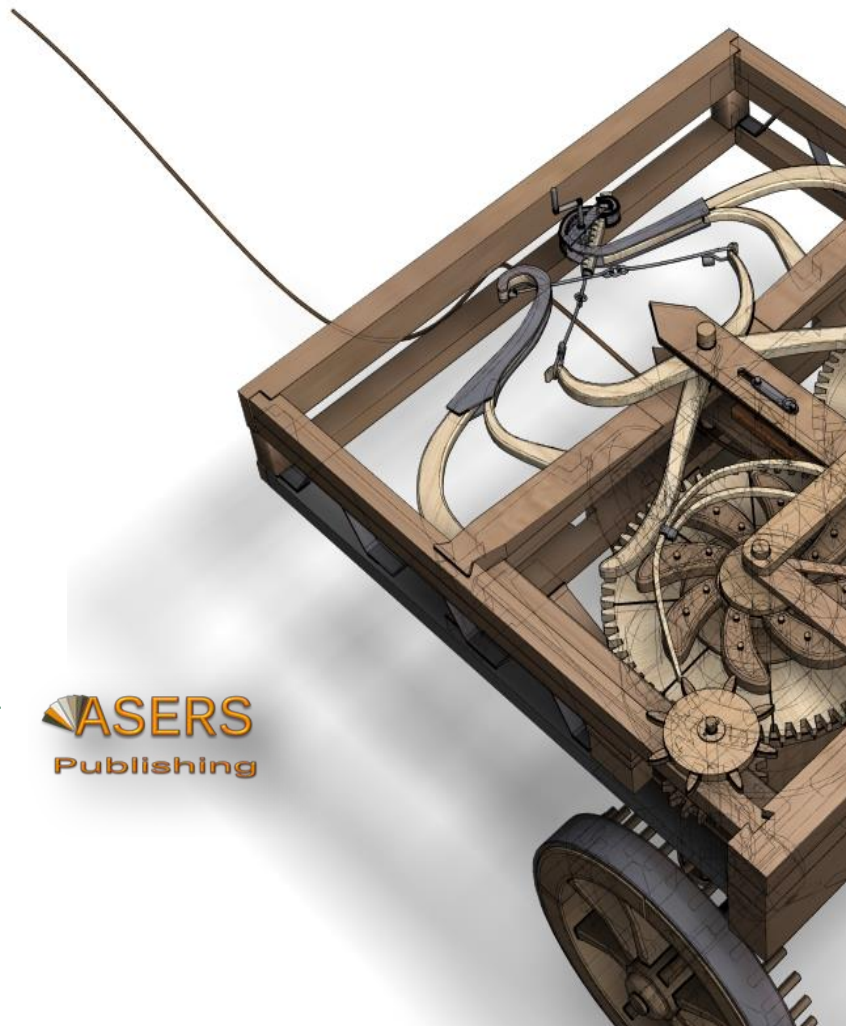
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# Call for Papers

## Winter Issues 2023

### Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism

**Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism** is an open access, peer-reviewed interdisciplinary research journal, aimed to publish articles and original research papers that contribute to the development of both experimental and theoretical nature in the field of Environmental Management and Tourism Sciences. The Journal publishes original research and seeks to cover a wide range of topics regarding environmental management and engineering, environmental management and health, environmental chemistry, environmental protection technologies (water, air, soil), pollution reduction at source and waste minimization, energy and environment, modelling, simulation and optimization for environmental protection; environmental biotechnology, environmental education and sustainable development, environmental strategies and policies.

Authors are encouraged to submit high quality, original works that discuss the latest developments in environmental management research and application with the certain scope to share experiences and research findings and to stimulate more ideas and useful insights regarding current best-practices and future directions in Environmental Management.

Also, this journal is committed to a broad range of topics regarding Tourism and Travel Management, leisure and recreation studies and the emerging field of event management. It contains both theoretical and applied research papers and encourages obtaining results through collaboration between researchers and those working in the tourism industry.

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## Temporal Change of Foreign Tourism in Sri Lanka: A Study on Economic Perspective

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**Abstract: Purpose:** Many countries rely heavily on tourism as an economic driver. It has a large workforce. Sri Lanka's economic turmoil has been a big impediment to tourist trips. Tourists are keeping away from this picturesque country because of high inflation, frequent power outages, and fuel scarcity. This impacted the tourism industry, job losses etc. This research investigates the relationship between foreign tourist arrivals (FTA) and nation's GDP, and the barriers to tourism growth.

**Methodology:** The work is completed through gaining access to quantitative and qualitative data. SLTDA tourist reports from 2018 to 2022, World Data (2020), UNWTO (2017), Central Bank of Sri Lanka provided quantitative data. The information comes from an assessment of literature, articles published in significant newspapers, journals. Cartographic techniques were employed for analysis, and the correlation test was used to assess the relationship between tourist arrivals, foreign receipts, and GNP.

**Findings:** There is a positive relationship between FTA and tourism growth. Economic crisis has deteriorated Sri Lanka's tourism as people are unwilling to visit Sri Lanka owing to uncertainty, inflation, power outages, and fuel scarcity, even the domestic tourist are unwilling to spend money for travelling and leisure purpose.

**Originality:** In addition to demand and supply factors, the article indicates that other factors, like inflation and currency value, play a significant role in tourism development. The paper cites several reasons why developing-country governments must preserve stability in order to thrive all sectors of the country's economy, including tourism.

**Keywords:** foreign tourist arrivals; economy; inflation; crude oil; GDP; tourism.

**JEL Classification:** Z30; Z31; Z32; Z33; Z38; R11.

### Introduction

Tourism entails the movement of people from one place to another to any place outside their usual environment for business, leisure or for any other purpose (UNWTO). Growing international tourism receipts has contributed significantly to GDP of many countries. The growth of tourism can earn foreign exchange earnings, revenues etc. and due to its nature of being labour intensive sector, it provides vast employment to many people directly and indirectly. The demand for tourism provides work to poor people, women, low skilled and low wage workers, skilled and unskilled migrant workers and thus helps in reducing poverty of the host region. It is due to this reason



the sector of tourism has been identified as the major reason for alleviation of poverty and the achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), (WTO and ILO, 2013).

Many nations around the world rely heavily on tourism as one of the major contributors to their GDP. There can be several reasons for the downfall of tourism in a country like economic downturn and recession, depreciating exchange rate, loss of market confidence and the loss of confidence of investors (Henderson, 2006). According to a common belief among tourism specialists, since foreign tourists are highly concerned about their personal safety, this business can only flourish in tranquil settings (Hitchcock, *et al.* 1993) Due to decline in tourist arrivals many sectors are affected in which hotels, restaurants and convention centres are the prominent ones, which not only happens due to lesser number of tourist but also less expenditure by them. (Pizam, 2009). In Sri Lanka, the tourism industry has a significant impact on both the GDP of the nation and the workers engaged in the industry. It also contributes significantly to the nation's balance of payments and foreign income. With inflation at an all-time high and the rupee depreciating against the dollar practically daily, Sri Lanka is currently experiencing one of the world's main economic crises.

Tourism was flourishing in the country very well, until in 2020 SARS COVID-19 started. Due to pandemic, many countries were forced to put lockdown of the nation; Sri Lanka imposed a lockdown on 20th March 2020 and put a travel ban as well. As a result of this many people in Sri Lanka lost their job and the tourism sector saw a drastic decline, there was a complete shutdown of tourism-related businesses likes the hotel industry, transport industry, etc. This ban on the tourism sector continued for the 8 months till December, 2020. The government decided to lift the ban but tourism failed to reach its pre- COVID peak. In the month of August, 2021 the country witness more tourist arrivals from different countries, but this year in 2022, near about 40 percent of pre bookings has been cancelled by foreign tourists which is mainly due to fuel shortage in the country (Wijesinghe, PTI, July 2022). Economists suggested an export-driven growth strategy as a means of overcoming the nation's current debt crisis and expressed optimism that the economy will fully recover (World Bank Group, 2021). A multitude of issues and challenges, such as a lack of marketing, public awareness, and infrastructure development, are now affecting tourism. Government officials, practitioners, and policymakers are concentrating on re-building solutions to deal with these issues. (Navirathan *et. al.*, 2023). This paper thus aims to highlight the relation between Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTA) and GNP contribution because the country's economy depends on the arrival of foreign tourists which is greatly affected during the present economic crisis.

## 1. Development of Tourism in Sri Lanka

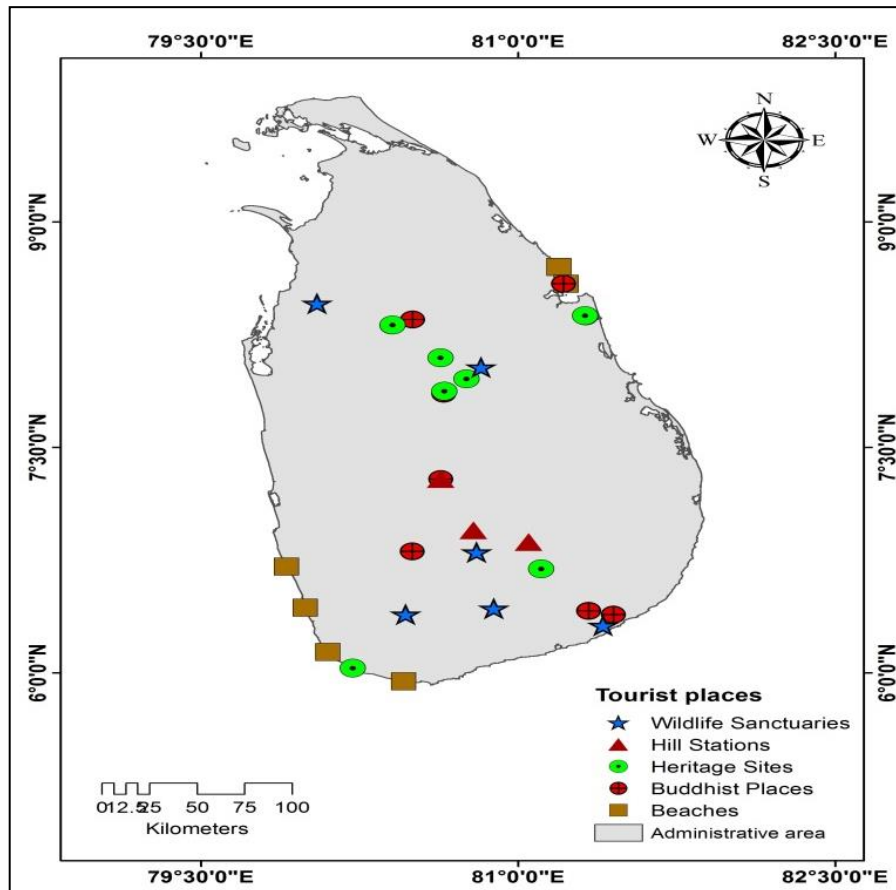
Development is a continuous process. Today, tourism is one of the most important elements in the development of a country and world economy, and it is also one of the leading sectors for generating revenue for advanced and emerging countries (Mason 2015). The Tourism Bureau in the country was established in 1937, and since then it has swiftly progressed in the tourism sector, however during the 2<sup>nd</sup> world war period the operations of the bureau was stopped, which again started working in 1948. The turnaround in the sector was first witnessed in 1966 when the Sri Lankan government came up with First Ten Year Master Plan for tourism which aimed at tourism promoting and marketing strategies. The plan was made after funding from USAID. The government legislative body passed Tourism Board Act No. of 1966 and Ceylon Hotel Corporation Act No. of 1966 for which the country witnessed first wave for the construction of new hotels with five resort development zone (Fernando, Bandara and Smith, 2013). The second wave of economic reforms began in the year 1989 with the introduction of second Ten Year Tourism Master Plan and the third wave of started with the ceasefire agreement signed between the rebels inside the country and the government led to stability in the political environment in 2002. After six years of the agreement the country was very peaceful and the government decided to come up with 3<sup>rd</sup> Tourism Master Plan which led to a boom in tourism industry (Fernando, Bandara and Smith, 2013).

Currently emerging from the pandemic and reviving tourist interest are travel destinations like Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand, where nature-based tourism has been a growing component (e.g., Steven, Rakotopare, and Newsome, 2021). Before the pandemic, nature-based vacation spots like Indonesia, the Philippines, Brunei, Cambodia, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam were all increasing their tourism businesses to capitalise on burgeoning consumers. (Perera *et. al.*, 2023). The strategic location and uniqueness of Sri Lanka helped her to become a tourist destination (Fernando. *et. al.*, 2016). Its placement in the Indian Ocean on the main sea and aviation routes connecting the Far East and Europe benefits the nation's global logistic hub (Sri Lanka Info, 2011). The geographical location was one of the major reasons that Sri Lanka was colonised by three European powers, the Portuguese (1505-1656), the Dutch (1656-1796) and the British (1796-1948) (Fernando. *et. al.*, 2016). Sri Lanka offers multiple option for tourists among them national park, wildlife, rich heritage and culture, and beautiful beaches are the prominent ones (Lai, 2002). Sri Lanka has a lengthy coastline. Several locations

there, like Hikkaduwa and Unawatuna, provide adventurous activities like scuba diving. Tangalle is also a highly famous destination for divers. Mirissa, a city in the nation, is well-known among tourists for its excellent whale-and dolphin-watching opportunities. (Fernando. et. al., 2016).

Sri Lanka is a nation with abundant resources based on its cultural past. There are 8 UNESCO World Heritage Sites there (Figure 1), including Buddhist and Hindu temples. The nation benefits from having 6 of the 300 ancient monuments in the globe as well as 49 sites that the World Tourism Organization has classed as unique attractions, 91 as rare attractions, 7 world heritage sites, and world heritage sites (de Silva, 2000). Among these are the central highlands region, which is made up of Horton Plains National Park and Knuckles Conservation Forest, the Sinharaja Forest Reserve, the Dutch Fort in Galle, the Golden Temple of Dambulla, the Temple of Tooth in Kandy, and the Nallur Kandaswamy Temple in Jaffna (Jayasinghe, 2020).

Figure 1. Tourist Places in Sri Lanka



Buddhist tourism is a significant part of the country's tourism. Sri Lanka is a country that is renowned for its spirituality and is home to several places of worship, tourism hotspots, and religious landmarks, among other things. More essential components of Buddhist tourism in Sri Lanka include Buddhist philosophy and Buddhist history. Meditation, yoga, explorations into the past and present, pilgrimage travel, and instruction in Buddhist philosophy are all included in Sri Lanka's Buddhist tourism. There are a lot of places that Sri Lanka tourism has discovered outside of Colombo that can provide for travellers who are on a mission to see life as it really is. The Sri Dalada Maligawa, also known as the Temple of the Tooth, which is located in the Kandy area and holds the revered tooth of Buddha, is surrounded by hundreds of monks. In Sri Lanka, there are 6,000 Buddhist monasteries with about 15,000 monks. Therefore, at sunrise, tourists will hear chanting emanating from all directions.

There is a positive relation between FDI and the GDP of the country (Mustafa, 2019). The contribution of tourism to the country's GDP was only 6% in the year 2000, which showed a progressive rise up to 12.6 % in the year 2020. The rate of increase was 4.28% per year. In the world, 10% of GDP is contributed by the travel and tourism industry and it is said that 1 out of every 10 jobs is related to tourism. (UNWTO, 2017). Tourism not only contributes to a country's GDP but is also said to be the main engine for regional development. it has an impact

on revenue earnings and growth, employment opportunities, etc. (Khalil *et al.* 2007). But due to the introduction of SARS COVID19, the government decided to impose a lockdown across the nation. This resulted in the shutdown of tourism and businesses related to tourism across the country. Though the lockdown was lifted in October 2020, the travel ban continued till November 2020. Tourism was reviving slowly after the COVID phase, but it has weakened again, as the economic crisis is going severe day by day, and tourists are choosing alternate destinations for travel instead of Sri Lanka. It was expected that the phenomena of revenge tourism likely to be taken place, but Sri Lanka failed to tackle the situation and the arrival of tourists also failed to reach 50% of the volume of pre COVID levels in 2021 and 2022. The present situation in Sri Lanka is there are fuel shortages for vehicles, and cooking gas shortages which are affecting the hotel industry, inflation is at its peak which accounts for 17.5 % now. The whole supply chain for the tourism industry has been impacted as companies struggle to maintain their regular operations. The supply chain and the ability of tourism businesses to serve tourists with goods, services, and experiences have been further affected by import restrictions implemented to control foreign exchange pouring out of the nation. (Perera *et. al* ,2023). In order to increase independence and prevent future high reliance on foreign debt, proper taxes have been advocated. (George A.S *et al* , 2022).

## 2. Data and Methods

### 2.1 Study Area

Sri Lanka is an island country lying in the Indian Ocean towards the south of India. The latitudinal extent of Sri Lanka is 5°55' north to 9° 51' north and the longitudinal extent is 79° 41' minute east to 81° 53' minute east. It is the 17<sup>th</sup> smallest country in Asia and 123<sup>rd</sup> smallest country in the world. Though the areal extent of Sri Lanka is not big, the rich heritage it carries and the development of tourism in the country make it stand among the top island countries of the world.

### 2.2 Data and Methodology

The work is done by accessing quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data is obtained from Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA) tourism reports from 2018 to 2022, World Data (2020), UNWTO (2017), Central Bank of Sri Lanka and Global Currency Forum. The qualitative data is gathered from an extensive literature review and articles published recently in leading newspapers, journals, and other publications; quantitative data is gathered from a large literature review. For analysis, mainly cartographic techniques are followed in MS Excel. The monthly data (from January 2020 to May 2022) of international tourists, the Sri Lankan currency (SLR) against the US dollar, the inflation rate, and crude oil prices have been taken and represented through the graph to understand the change with time as well. Later, the correlation test was used to determine the causal relationship between tourist arrivals, foreign receipts, and their share of GNP.

## 3. Results

### 3.1 Tourism in Economic Crisis, 2022

The threat of economic crisis to the tourism industry can be divided under two categories, A. external threats which include recession, currency fluctuation, and taxation. B. Internal threats that include rising costs, falling revenues and unprofitability. The whole nation is going into turmoil; nobody knows what the value of their currency on the next day will be, or when the fuel will be next available in the country. As a result of that, even though the tourism industry as a whole is under a downtrend, foreign tourist arrival has become less and even the domestic tourism is also on a downtrend as people prefer to keep money in hand instead of spending it on leisure purposes. Revenue to the industry is falling; hotel operators are ready to rent rooms at a cheaper price.

The number of visitors had been increasing since the hotels and other tourism-related businesses were restored, albeit more slowly (Figure 2a and 2b). However, as the economic crisis occurred, the number of visitors also began to decline, and the situation is now such that 40% of international tourists have cancelled their pre-bookings for the month of August 2022. (PTI, July 2022). 1, 06,500 international visitors arrived in March 2022, but the number fell to 32,856 in June (SLTDA). This demonstrates even more how little interest there is in travelling to nations experiencing political unrest and economic hardship. Due to the current gasoline scarcity, which has negatively impacted visitor arrivals, travel companies are substantially raising prices.



Figure 2a. Foreign Tourist Arrival in Sri Lanka 1962-2022

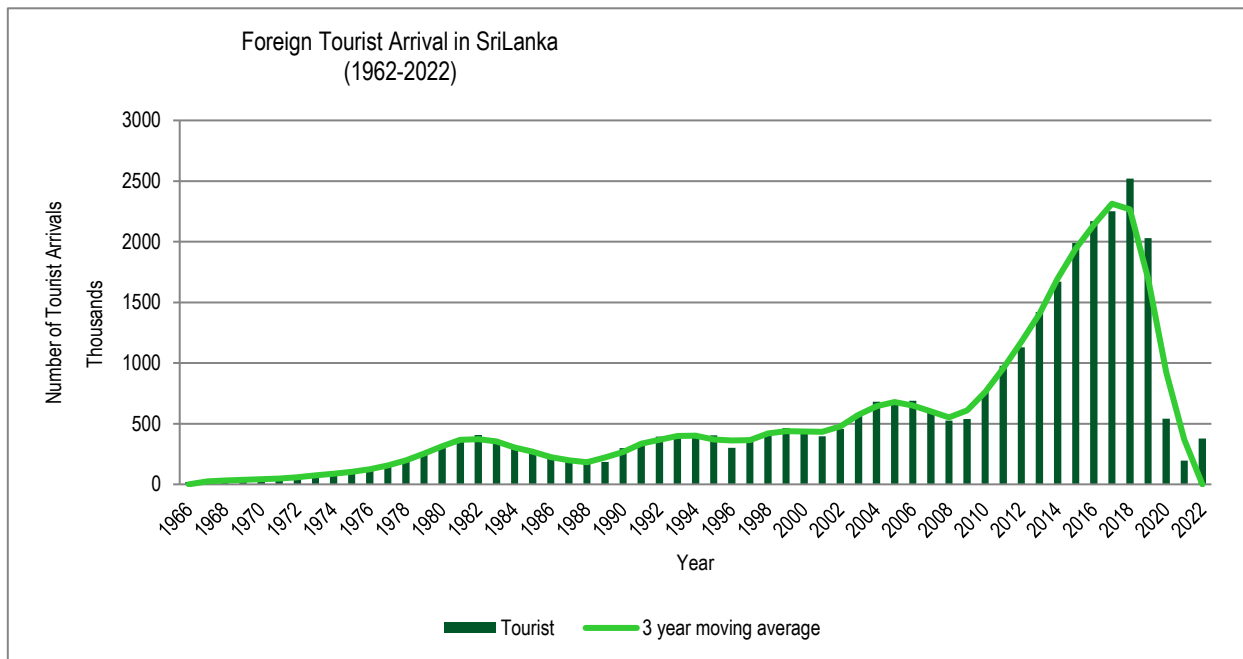
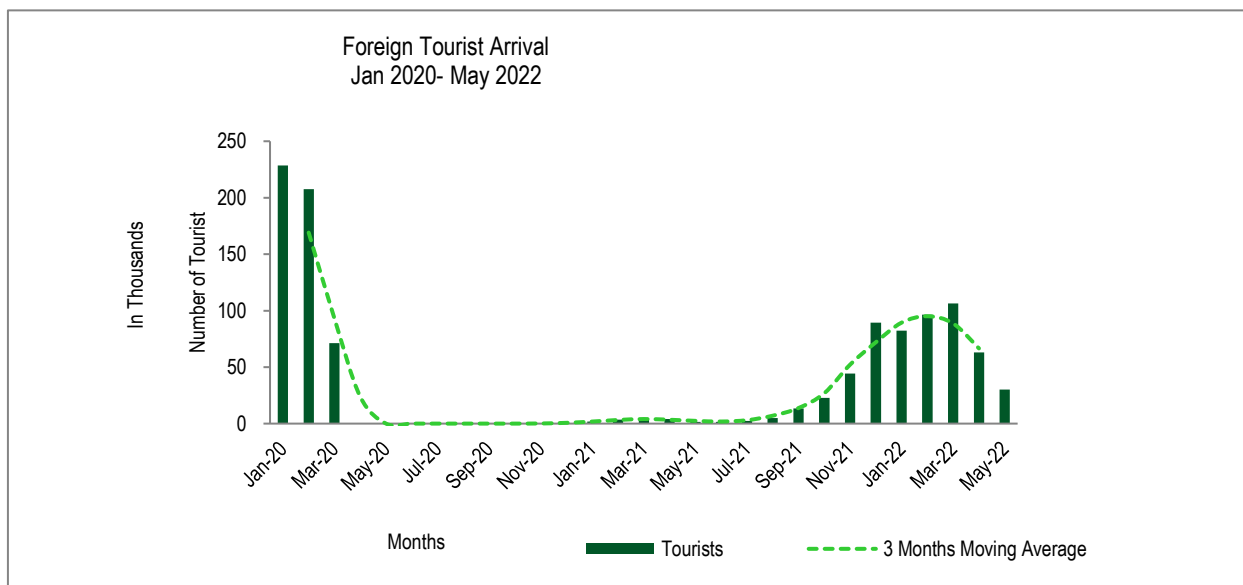


Figure 2b. Foreign Tourist Arrival in Sri Lanka (January 2020- May 2022)

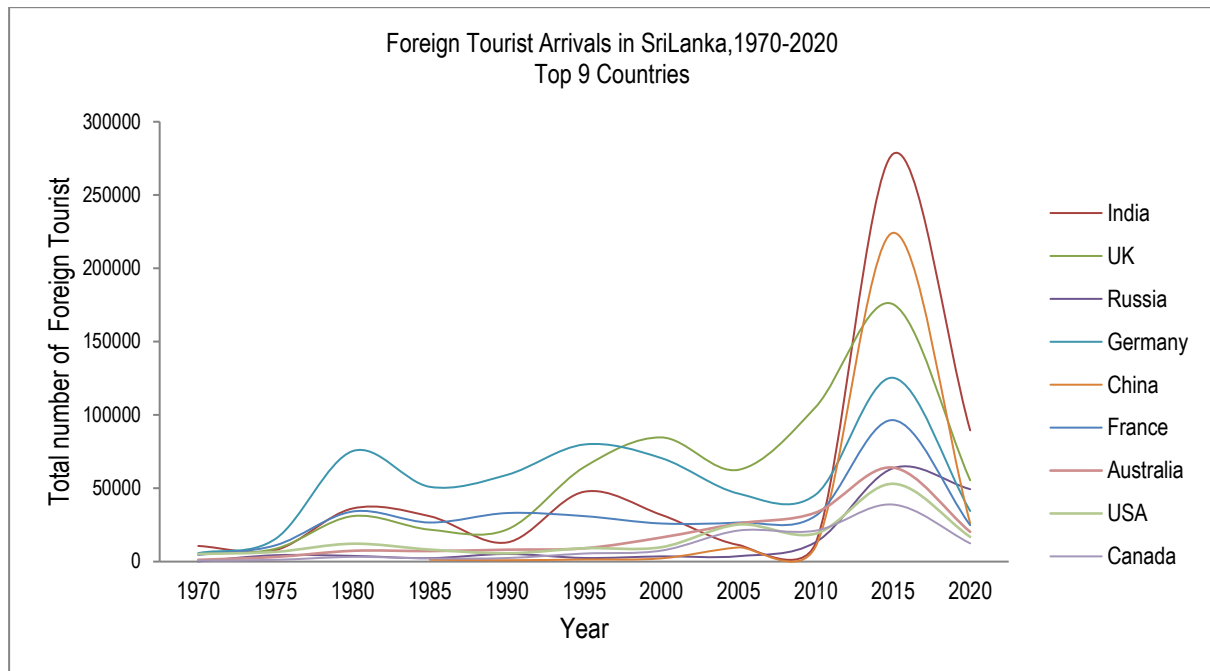


Since the Legislative Council of Sri Lanka adopted the First Ten Year Plan for Tourism in 1966, there has been a sharp growth in the number of international visitors, which has benefited the nation in several ways, including an increase in foreign reserves, the creation of job possibilities, and the development of hotels and resorts thanks to the passage of the Ceylon Hotel Corporation Act No. of 1966. Early on at TYTMP1, the majority of foreign visitors were from European nations, but subsequently, Indian and Chinese tourists started to flock there as well. There have been times when internal problems in Sri Lanka caused a temporary decline in visitor arrivals, however the country's tourism sector was greatly impacted by the post-TYTMP2 initiative, which intended to revive the industry. The number of international visitors entering the nation grew quickly in the years that followed.

Tourism is affected in Sri Lanka because of numerous external problems. The 2001 terrorist attack on the US Twin Towers caused a sharp fall in foreign tourist arrivals. The entry of tourists from the USA and Europe caused a quick fall, particularly with regard to the issue of security. In 2008, when there was a global economic crisis, a second significant effect was noted when very few tourists visited the country. However, following the economic crises' recovery and the Sri Lankan government's agreement to end hostilities with the LTTE, a rebel

group in Sri Lanka created an environment that encouraged tourists to travel to the country. Post 2008 Tourism in Sri Lanka gained a rapid strength (Figure3).

Figure 3. Trend of foreign tourist arrival from top 9 destinations of world (1970-2020)



The favourable circumstances did not persist for long, however, as the number of tourists arriving in 2020 dramatically decreased initially due to the introduction of COVID-19, and although the tourism industry was reopened following COVID-19 and the execution of the vaccination schedule, it did not fully recover. Figure 2a demonstrates that even while tourism was growing slowly but steadily, it once again decreased as a result of the economic crisis that began in October and November 2021. Fuel shortages across the nation, which had an impact on the transportation sector - one of the key drivers of the tourist industry - are to blame for the current predicament. In addition to regular power outages, inflationary pressure has a detrimental effect on international visitors by forcing tour companies to raise tour prices.

### 3.2 Relation between Foreign Tourist Arrivals, Earnings, and GNP Contribution

The total number of tourist arrival in Sri Lanka was 384000 in the year 1995 contributing 351 million USD to the country's GNP, it was raised to 2.03 million tourists in the year 2019. But 2020 saw a rapid decline with only 540000 tourists, the majority of them came in January and February contributing 1.08 billion dollars to the country's GNP, with an average income of 1993 USD from every tourist (figure 4). In the year 2020, there was a complete shutdown of tourism activities from April till November, and when it resumed only 393 tourists came from across the world, it never recovered completely until November 2021, but the economic crisis has again resulted in a rapid decline of foreign tourist arrivals in the country and if this continues this industry will take several years to reach to pre COVID levels.

Figure 4. Relation between Number of Tourist Arrivals and Foreign Receipts

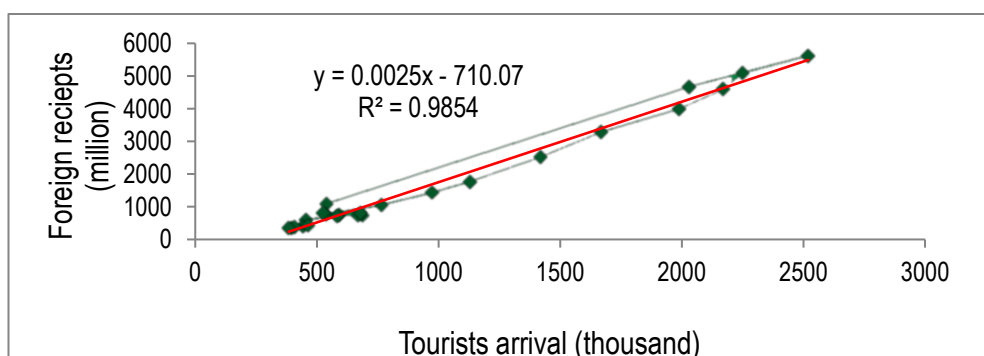
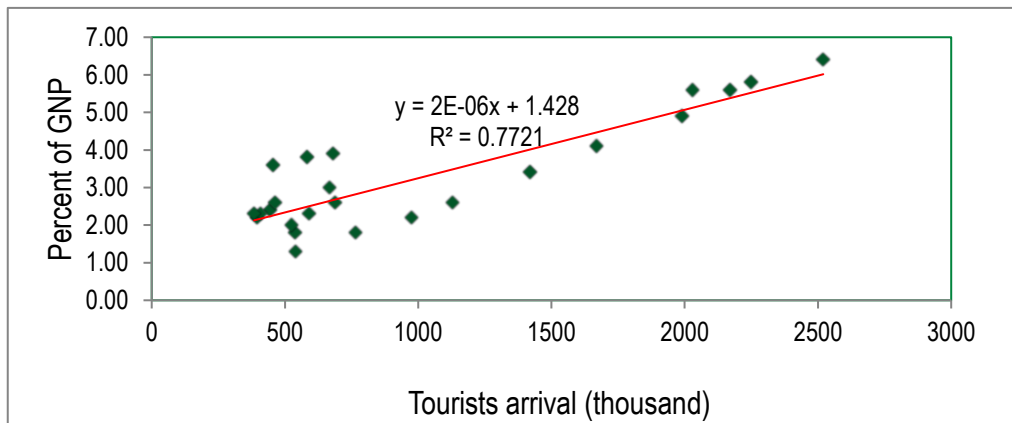


Figure 5. Relation between Number of Tourist Arrivals and GNP contribution

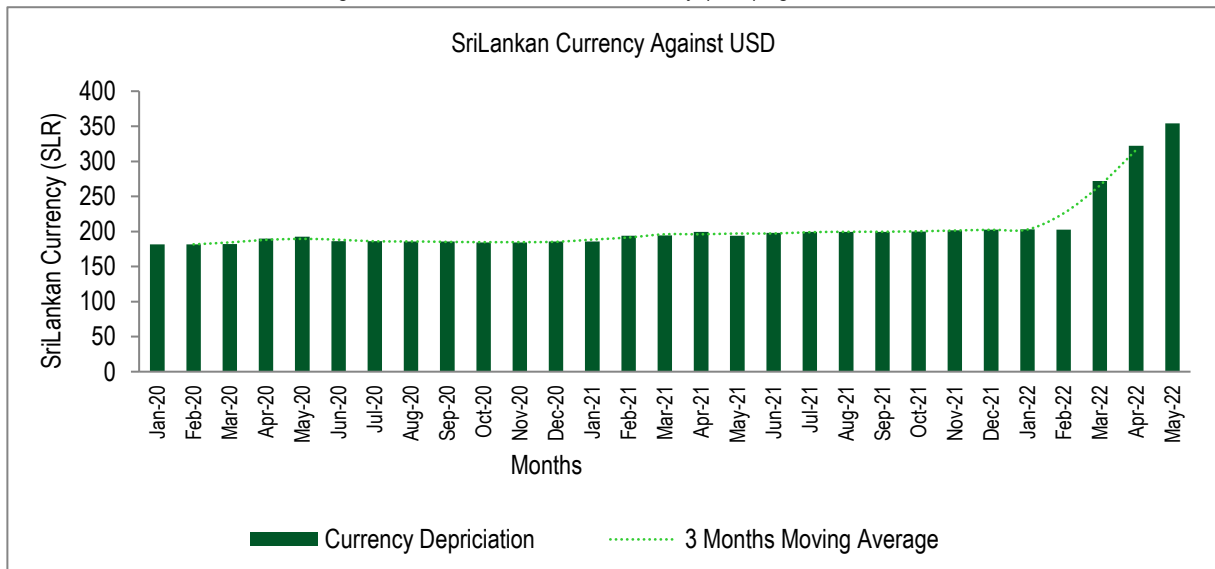


There is a direct relation between number of tourist and the contribution of tourist towards GNP (Figure. 5). The relationship between foreign revenues and tourist arrivals in Sri Lanka is highly positive ( $R^2 = 0.984$ ), and the relationship between those two variables and their contribution to the nation's gross national product is similarly favourable ( $R^2 = 0.7721$ ). This reflects the expanding GNP and foreign revenue contributions made by tourism to the nation. When compared to pre-pandemic levels in 2019, which were 2030000, the number of foreign tourist arrivals has increased significantly. 25 years ago, or in 1997, there were only 384000 foreign visitors arriving, a figure that has increased by a factor of more than two. Only 2.30 % of the total GNP was contributed by the tourist industry in 1997; this contribution peaked in 2018 at 6.40 %, and it slightly decreased in 2019 to 5.60 %.

### 3.3 Sri Lankan Currency against USD

Currency depreciation lowers demand for the travel and tourism sector (Hinderson, 2006) A significant issue is the decline in the value of the Sri Lankan rupee Prior to the Co-Vid, the value of the rupee was 180 before it was further devalued to 200 during and after the Co-Vid. In May 2022, it increased even further, reaching 358 Sri Lankan rupees to a USD (Central Bank of Sri Lanka) (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Value of Sri Lankan Currency (SLR) against USD



The whole economic climate of the nation has undergone a significant transformation as a result of the political unrest and the economic crisis. It has also had an impact on the tourism industry, which was struggling to rebound in the wake of CO-VID 19. The number of international visitor arrivals saw a 50% reduction in April 2022 compared to March 2022. The number of international tourists arriving in April 2022 is barely one-fourth as much as it was in April 2019. (2019–2021, SLTDA report).

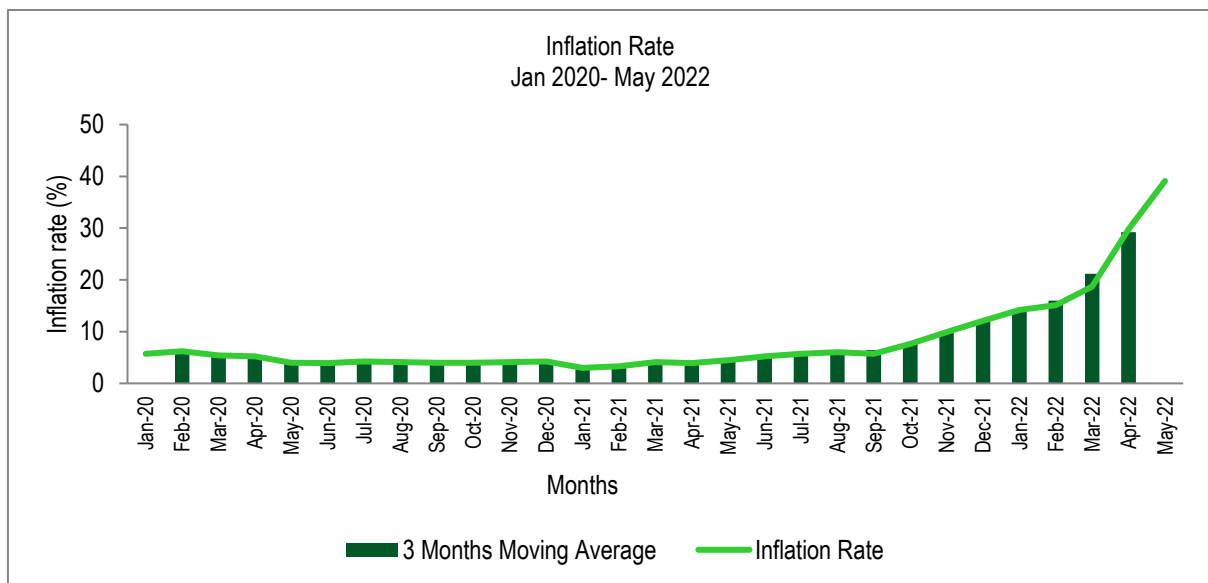
## 4. Discussions

### 4.1 Inflationary Pressure

Every economic downturn is accompanied by a huge issue with inflation, which makes domestic tourists reluctant to spend a lot of money on travel and other leisure activities because they are apprehensive about the future. Inflation in the Maldives rose to 17 percent in the years 2008 to 2009, a time when there was a severe financial crisis around the world. (WTO and ILO,2013).

The country's currency has been devalued to half of its value since February 2022, which would prevent citizens from spending money on leisure activities or accruing debt. As a result, inflationary pressure, a key cause for worry at the moment in Sri Lanka, will have a significant impact on the tourist sector (Barnet, 1975). This will have a profound effect on domestic tourism in the local area. If this trend continues, it will be very difficult for the tourist sector to recover. People have strong psychological motivations to avoid spending money on things they do not need, and they tend to save more money than they spend on leisure activities. (1975, Barnet). The nation is presently going through a severe economic crisis, which has led to a lack of essentials including food, fuel, cooking gas, medication, and other supplies (Jayawardena *et al.* 2023). The economic crisis has significantly changed peoples' everyday routines, including their eating, cooking, and travelling habits as well as other behaviours. (Sooriyaarachchi, P., and Jayawardena, R., 2023). Although there is ongoing discussion regarding Sri Lanka's economic issue, it is generally acknowledged that the nation's large levels of foreign debt are a significant contributing cause (Publicfinance, 2023, 2022). As of 2021, Sri Lanka's total debt totaled a whopping 119% of its GDP (IMF, 2022), with its foreign debt accounting for 64.2% of the country's GDP. Sri Lanka has decided to concentrate its economic strategy on industries that export goods in order to bring in foreign cash as a result of its high level of debt. (Saliya, C. A. 2023)

Figure 7. Inflation Rate in Sri Lanka (January 2020- May 2022)



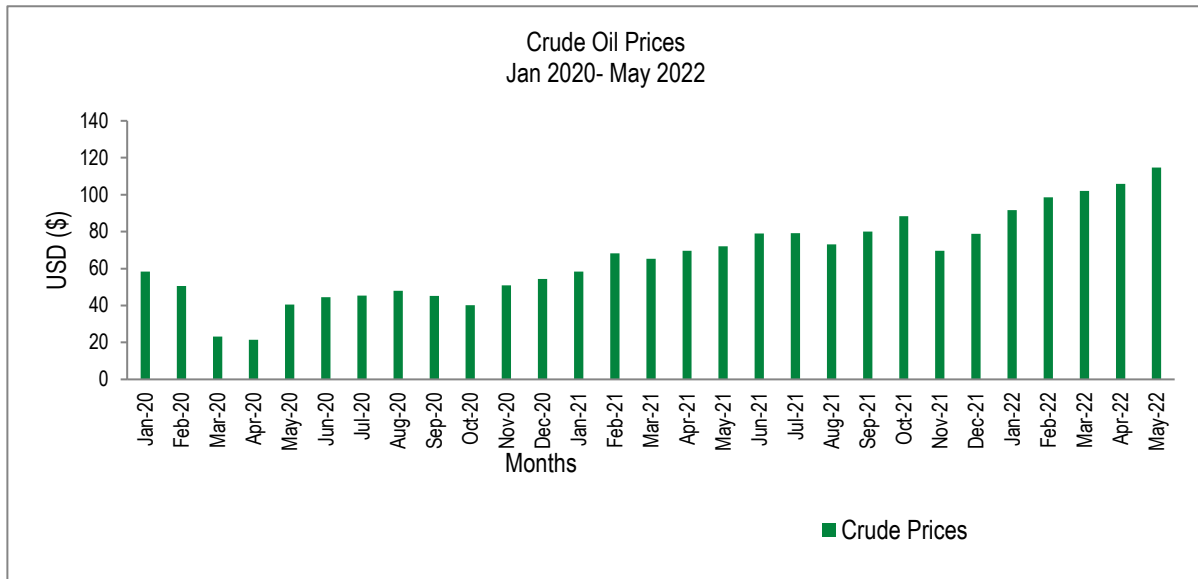
Even when the whole world, including Sri Lanka, was under the control of COVID-19 from March 2021 to March 2022, inflation in Sri Lanka was not even an issue. The first indication of inflation appeared in the second quarter of 2021, rising from 4.1 percent to 5.2 percent. The third quarter saw an increase to 5.85 percent, while the fourth quarter saw an increase to 9.9 percent. The situation deteriorated further in 2022; the inflation rate, which was 14.2 percent at the start of the year, rose to 39.1 percent in May 2022 (Figure7).

### 4.2 Effect Due to Rise in Crude Oil Prices

The worldwide increase in crude oil prices, which directly affects the aviation business and transportation industry, is a big worry as well as the country's inflation, which is one of the issues the tourist industry is dealing with. In January 2022, the price of crude oil on the world market was 60 USD per barrel. By May 2022, it had increased to over twice that amount, or 113 dollars per barrel (Figure 8). This had an impact on the tourist industries of many countries, including Sri Lanka. The price of crude oil has increased dramatically, which has led

to a two-fold increase in airline costs as well as price increases for cars used in the travel industry, which affects both local and international tourists.

Figure 8. Crude Oil Prices in International Market (January 2020 – May 2022)



On January 1, 2022, the cost of gasoline in Sri Lanka was 204 SLR and the cost of diesel was 139 SLR; both prices have since climbed by more than 100%. On May 23, 2022, the price of gasoline in Sri Lanka increased to 450 SLR, while the price of diesel increased to 445 SLR. This has an impact on the transportation industry throughout the whole nation, especially the tourism sector, which depends heavily on transportation to transfer people from different regions of the nation. As a result of the depreciating local currency and the sharp rise in oil prices, which is having a negative impact on tourist arrivals, tour operators are being compelled to raise costs. As more and more individuals become aware of the situation, they are cancelling their previously made reservations.

### 4.3 Problem of Unemployment

More people are employed directly and indirectly by the tourism industry than in any other sector, which contributes to economic growth (Glossing et. al. 2020, Zaei 2013). More than 400 000 people work in Sri Lanka's tourism industry (SLTDA 2018), with 40% of them directly connected to the sector through hotel operations, tour operators, etc., and 60% indirectly through persons running souvenir shops and transportation services in popular tourist areas. It's not just about Sri Lanka, the Maldives' declining tourist industry also compelled tour operators to implement cost-cutting measures, which led to job cuts and unpaid leaves for a short period of time, severely impacting the labour market. The same issue also affected Costa Rican tour companies, who responded by lowering fixed expenses, shortening the workweek, and requiring unpaid absences of at least two to three months. 2013 (WTO and ILO). The issue of a quick recovery in Sri Lankan tourism is quite difficult; Sri Lanka is one of those countries where the tourist sector was completely shut down for approximately 8-9 months, and many individuals were laid off during the Co-vid breakout, many of whom were from different countries and were forced to return to their own country, creating a gap in the skilled labour demand that was needed in the tourism business.

The laydown of people has led many people to find alternative jobs in different sectors, hotels and gastronomy recorded the worst decline in the whole industry in Sri Lanka (hall et. al 2020), and as a result of that people are a majority of people are not willing to get back to the tourism sector, due to uncertainty of co-vid cases if it surges again or the economic crisis that has again declined the number of tourist arrivals in the country, if the people are discouraged to get jobs in the tourism sector of the country then many people who are the entrepreneurs in this sector has to depend on the foreign people. The result of this will be quite negative, firstly, the money or the salary that will be paid to the foreigners will not be resented in their own country and secondly, it will fail to reduce unemployment in the country (Glossing, 2020).



#### 4.4 Change in Tourist Motives for Traveling

During the outbreak of co-vid most countries-imposed travel bans, and the tourism sector has hit badly, during the post-co-vid period when the travel ban was uplifted, there was a spurt in domestic tourism, and it dominated the whole tourism industry (Haywood, 2020), but in many places, it was only for visiting close people and relatives promoting leisure tourism. In Sri Lanka, though tourism was increasing even at a slower rate the instability in the political environment and local politics has taken the whole sector under its darkest side. In the current situation, and the way the country has been hit by inflation and other issues, people are preferring to keep money in hand rather than spending, this has led to significant decrease in domestic tourism. The political crisis, emergency situation in some places, and shut down of hotels in some areas has affected the mind of local people negatively, all these factors have led to decrease in domestic tourism.

#### 4.5 Economic Crisis and Hotel Industry

There are many sectors in Sri Lanka that require capital infusion from different corporates and foreign investors, even though there are many people who are ready to infuse capital in hotel industries and others, but the lack of willingness towards uncertainty and economic crisis has to lead to a shortfall in investment. (Global Financial Crisis Bulletin). There are many businesses in Sri Lanka, particularly the hotel industry, and food services, that have shown a downtrend in the number of visitor arrivals, etc. The decline doesn't only consider the fewer arrivals of tourists, but less spending from a tourist is also a major reason for the decline (Pizam, 2009) which is also evident from the SLTDA official report. Power cuts and blackouts in different parts of the nation have hit the hotel industry significantly, though an alternative has been kept in the form of generators. It requires fuel, which also has a shortfall in the nation. A hotel manager in an interview with ANI as published in The Print, April 2022 said the major reason for the decline in the hotel industry is power cuts, hike in fuel prices, and unavailability of essential items, though they have set up their power banks without electricity, it will be difficult to survive, it is one of the major things that the tourist looks for. The problem of the hotel industry is not new, it is ever growing problem since the advent of co-vid in the country. The hotel occupancy rate prior to Co-vid used to be 70% which had fallen to 50% in January, 2020 and further fallen to 2.1% in March 2020, even though the domestic tourist were allowed to travel and foreign tourist was commenced from December 2020. The hotel occupancy rate barely reached 8.6% to December 2020. Since then, it failed to match its pre co-vid rate. (SLTDA, Annual Statistical Report, 2020).

#### Conclusion

The facts and results make it clear that there is a connection between the country's GNP and the rise of tourism as a result of visitor arrivals. A large portion of the island nation's population depends on tourism, but because of the country's economic difficulties, visitor numbers have dropped quickly. Although tourism was completely shut down from March 2020 to November 2020 as part of COVID-19, the reopening of tourism was drawing in a lot of visitors from around the world. The situation was getting better until a political upheaval-induced economic catastrophe hit the country. They were affected by the fear of inflation, the unpredictability of domestic tourism, and the depreciating value of currency because they preferred to keep their money in hand rather than use it for leisure activities. In contrast, overseas tourists were negatively impacted by the shortage of gasoline, the increase in crude oil prices, and the frequent cuts in power supply across the nation. As a result, many foreign tourists cancelled their pre-planned trips to this country. Many people are in danger as a result of the crisis' impact on unemployment, rising food and gasoline prices, and other factors. The analysis, nevertheless, was based on information from Sri Lanka's official tourism data and real-time reporting from various sources; as a result, the ground situation has to be explored and there is still room for more research based on local-level ground data.

#### Credit Authorship Contribution Statement

**Ayan Bhakat:** Conceptualization; Methodology; Formal Analysis; Writing – original draft; Data curation; Validation; Writing – review and editing; Visualization.

**Nirmalya Das:** Conceptualization; Methodology; Formal Analysis; Writing – original draft; Supervision; Validation; Writing – review and editing.

**Santu Guchhait:** Conceptualization; Methodology; Formal Analysis; Writing – original draft; Writing – review and editing; Visualization.

#### Declaration of competing interest

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