

SAFETY AND SECURITY IN TOURISM: A STRATEGIC APPROACH FOR TOURISM INDUSTRY OF SRI LANKA TO RECOVER FROM EASTER SUNDAY ATTACK

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ABSTRACT

The tourism industry has a history of being highly reactive to short-term local and international events. "The Easter Sunday attack"- attacks against civilians carried out in places of worship and city hotels on Easter Sunday in Sri Lanka created a destructive effect on the whole tourism industry. So Sri Lanka should focus on the present's possible ways to overcome the effects of a crisis in order to ensure a sustainable recovery strategy. Therefore this study conducted to analyze impacts of the Easter Sunday attacks in the tourism industry and build a strategic approach to recover from this serious problem. Also to fill up the gap between crisis and recovery, the present study provides a theoretical framework and will then emphasize the practical viewpoint of Sri Lanka based on the related studies about tourism crisis Management. This study found there are several inefficiencies in the tourism crisis management of Sri Lanka. Therefore the government and the related Tourism Authorities should give a keen interest in the implementation of the recovery strategic approach.

Keywords: strategic approach, safety, security, tourism, Easter Sunday attack, terrorism

INTRODUCTION:

Tourism is one of the fast-growing businesses industry in the world. There are various definitions for tourism, the World Tourism Organization (WTO) has defined tourism "traveling and staying in places outside from their usual environment for more than twenty-four hours and not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited" (Suranga Silva, 2011).

When planning these trips, safety has become one of the first factors to consider. Safety needs to travelers are expressed in terms of the safety of people's life property and psychology. They hope that in the course of a journey, no vehicle or boat accidents occur, they don't get sick, they're not robbed, they don't have things stolen, and that they safely complete the entire journey, etc. They also hope to achieve a psychological feeling of security. For example, they hope there is no political upheaval, terrorism, and war in the country. So when there is a threat to the safety of the tourist people, it shows a destructive effect on the whole tourism industry.

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One of the problems our society is currently facing is the increased number of terrorist attacks. According to the World Economic Forum (2015), terrorism has been increasing the last 15 years dramatically, leading to a five-time increase in terrorism-related to death since 2000. At the very least, 18 terroristic attacks related to tourism targets have been reported following the 9/11 attack (Paraskevasa & Arendellb, 2007) Terrorism incidents are not easy to compare since they differ in terms of places they occur, the responsible radicals behind them and the implications following an attack

Terrorism in Sri Lanka has been a highly destructive phenomenon during the periods of the Sri Lankan Civil War (1983–2009) and the first and second JVP insurrections (1971 and 1987–89, respectively) The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) are mainly accused of the destruction caused by terrorism in the country. The civil conflict and JVP insurrections had adversely affected tourism, with arrival figures reducing 43%, year on year (1982-3). Total arrivals were 230,106 in 1986, down 43% from 1982. The Ceylon Tourist Board provided a range of concessions to the industry in order to help them survive the crisis. In 1987, tourist arrivals declined 23% year on year (1986-7).

Likewise in 2019 “The Eater Sunday attack”- attacks against civilians carried out in places of worship and city hotels on Easter Sunday. On 21st April 2019, Easter Sunday, three churches in Sri Lanka and three luxury hotels in Colombo were targeted in a series of coordinated terrorist suicide bombings. Later that day, there were smaller explosions at a housing complex in Dematagoda and a guest house in Dehiwala. 259 people were killed including at least 45 foreign nationals and three police officers, and at least 500 were injured. The church bombings were carried out during the Easter Sunday celebration in Negombo, Batticaloa, and Colombo; the hotels that were bombed were the Shangri-La, Cinnamon Grand, Kingsbury, and Tropical Inn

According to Sri Lankan government officials, all seven of the suicide bombers in the attacks were Sri Lankan citizens associated with National Thowheeth Jama'ath, a local militant Islamist group with suspected foreign ties. On 23 April 2019, Amaq News Agency, a propaganda outlet for the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), stated that “the perpetrators of the attack targeting the citizens of coalition countries and Christians in Sri Lanka were Islamic State fighters”. A man believed to be long-silent ISIL leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi praised the attackers during an 18-minute video on a range of topics.

In early June, in a leaked confidential assessment of the economic damage by the Easter Sunday attacks, the Central Bank of Sri Lanka claimed that the loss of government revenue from indirect tax such as VAT was

approximately Rupees 26 billion for the year. It cited a major impact on the country's trade deficit of the balance of payments, which would be affected badly due to the negative impact on tourism. It stated further that many foreign direct investments have been postponed.

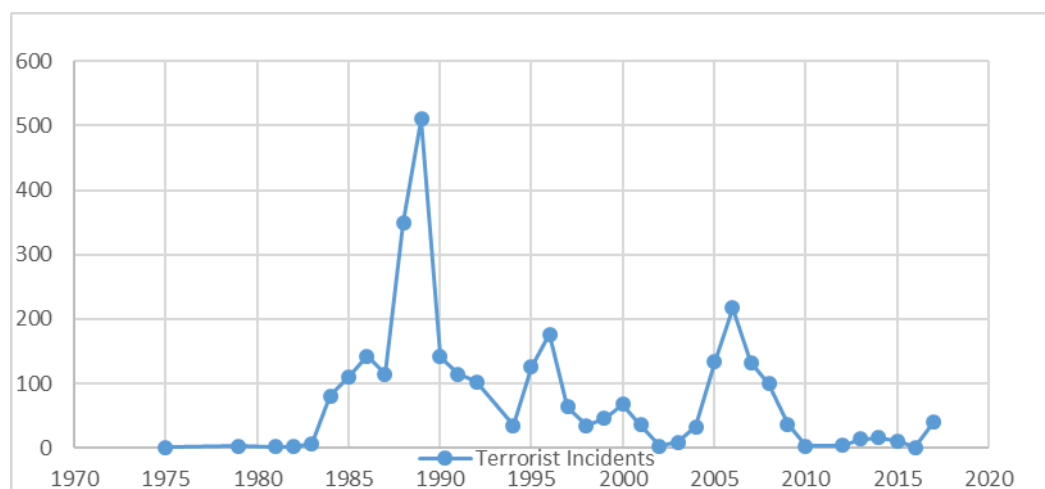
However, to deliver an effective response to this attack, research is needed on recovery strategies, which will allow cities to retake their normal course in a shorter period of time, will save money and energy and will help tourism recover. Therefore this study conducted to analyze are impacts of the Easter Sunday attacks in the tourism industry and build a strategic approach to recover from this serious problem.

METHODOLOGY:

The study completely based on institutional quantitative secondary data sources. The data collected for the period 1979 and 2019 (June) from the Tourism Development Authority. The descriptive analysis uses to explain trend of effects of tourism. This study uses to indicate effects of Easter Sunday attacks on tourism Sector. Therefore, tourism arrivals by month and tourism arrivals by countries in 2018 and 2019 monthly data were used the Post-Easter Sunday attack period compare with the Pre- attacked period Easter Sunday attack period. Moreover, this part will perform by MS Excel, for simple graphs, tables, and calculations.

DISCUSSION AND RESULT

The tourism industry has a history of being highly reactive to crises, disasters and health issues at local and international levels. A country with a good image for safe tourism can use it as a competitive advantage attracts different segments if the international tourism market. Regarding the history of Sri Lanka, the safety and the security in tourism industry has been identified as one of the force causing the changes in the tourism sector after Sri Lankan Civil War and the first and second



JVP insurrections.

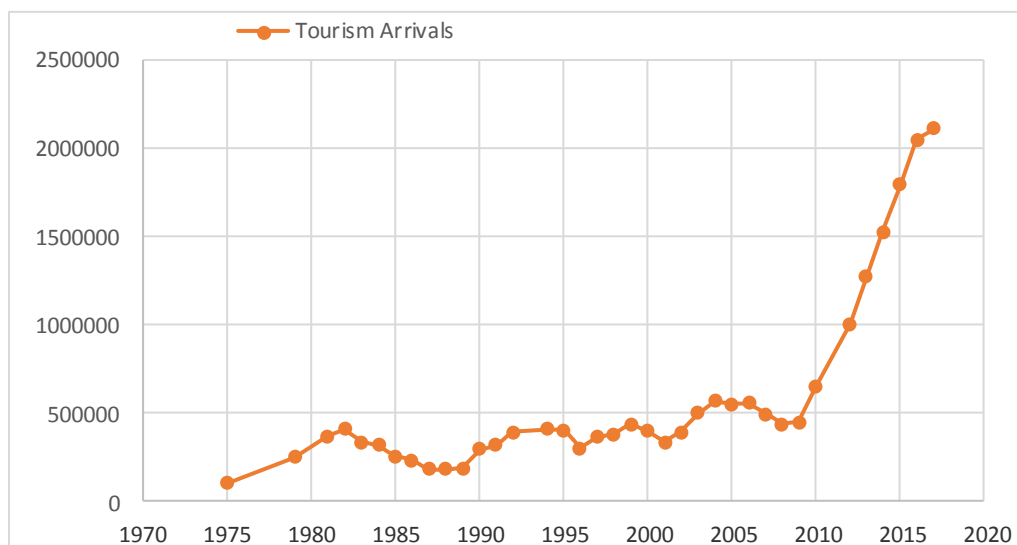
Figure.1 Terrorist Incidents in Sri Lanka from 1975- 2019

source: website-our world data

Figure 1 shows the terrorist-related incident after 1975 to 2017 particularly the second half of the 1980's due to the civil disturbance through the armed conflict. The terrorist incidence highly records in the period after 1988. In 1983 there have 510 records about terrorist attacks which were the largest amount in history. This issue of safety and security is ever more important not only to the community but also the tourist as well. According to Nickerson's Theory of motivation by using Maslow's level of the hierarchy of needs, there are two main motivations for tourism one is psychological needs and another one is safety needs.

The civil conflict that started in July 1983 and had adversely affected tourism, with arrival figures reducing 43%, year on year (1982-3). Total arrivals were 230,106 in 1986, down 43% from 1982. The Ceylon Tourist Board provided a range of concessions to the industry in order to help them survive the crisis. In 1987, tourist arrivals declined 23% year on year (1986-7). In the mid-1980s, the declining security situation began to have an increasingly negative impact on the Sri Lankan economy, and in early 1988 economic prospects for the 1990s appeared to be linked in part to a resolution of the ethnic conflict. According to figure .2 in the low level of tourism, arrival was 184732 in 1989 which was the year 512 the terrorist attacks occurred and the highest record in Sri Lanka. So it's clear in Sri Lanka terrorism has effect tourism arrival.

The Sri Lankan tourism industry has been experiencing rapid expansion and diversification, to become one of the largest and fastest-growing economic sectors of the post-conflict economy, despite many issues and challenges. Tourist arrivals



to Sri Lanka have increased from 448,000 in 2009, to 1.8 million in 2015. The earnings from tourism also have surged from US dollars 349 million in 2009 to US

dollars 2,981 million in 2015, becoming the third-largest foreign exchange earner in the country, acceding only to workers' remittances and income from garment exports.

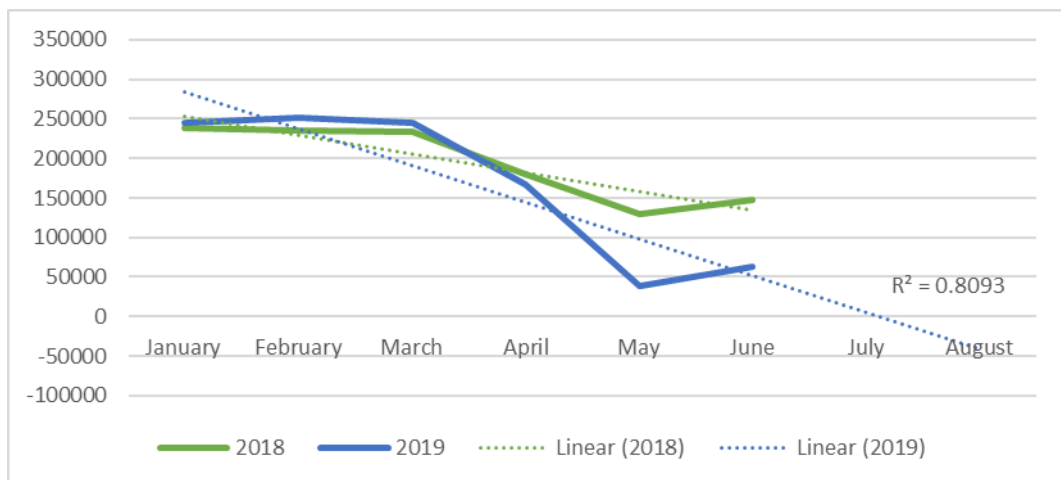
Figure. 2 Tourism Arrivals from 1975 – 2017

Source: Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority

Tourist arrivals recorded the highest annual arrivals of 2,116,407 in 2017, the year-on-year growth in arrivals moderated to 3.2 percent. Earnings from tourism increased by 11.6 percent to US dollars 3,925 million in 2017, in comparison to US dollars 3,518 million in 2016

Following the acts of terror that took place on Easter Sunday, Sri Lanka Tourism has continued shocked deeply. On 21st April 2019, Easter Sunday, three churches in Sri Lanka and three luxury hotels in Colombo were targeted in a series of coordinated terrorist suicide bombings. The hotels that were bombed the Shangri-La, Cinnamon Grand, Kingsbury, and Tropical Inn. It is very clear from the pattern of blasts that tourists were also targeted. Even during the LTTE attacks tourists were not particularly targeted. So from the Easter Sunday attack, the terror attacks hit the tourism industry hard - hotels around the country are now virtually empty.

Figure.3 illustrated the total number of international tourist arrivals to Sri Lanka during May 2019 was 37,802. The total number of international tourist arrivals to Sri Lanka during June 2019 was 63,072. So after Easter Sunday Attacks, the tourism arrivals have been declined. As of 30th June 2019, 1,008,449 tourists had visited Sri Lanka for this year. It is a decline of 13.4% over last year when 1,164,647 tourists had visited the country during the same period. In comparison to May last year, there was a decline of 70.8% when the arrivals were 129,466 and for June last year, there was a drop of 57.0 % when the arrivals were 146,828. Even though the

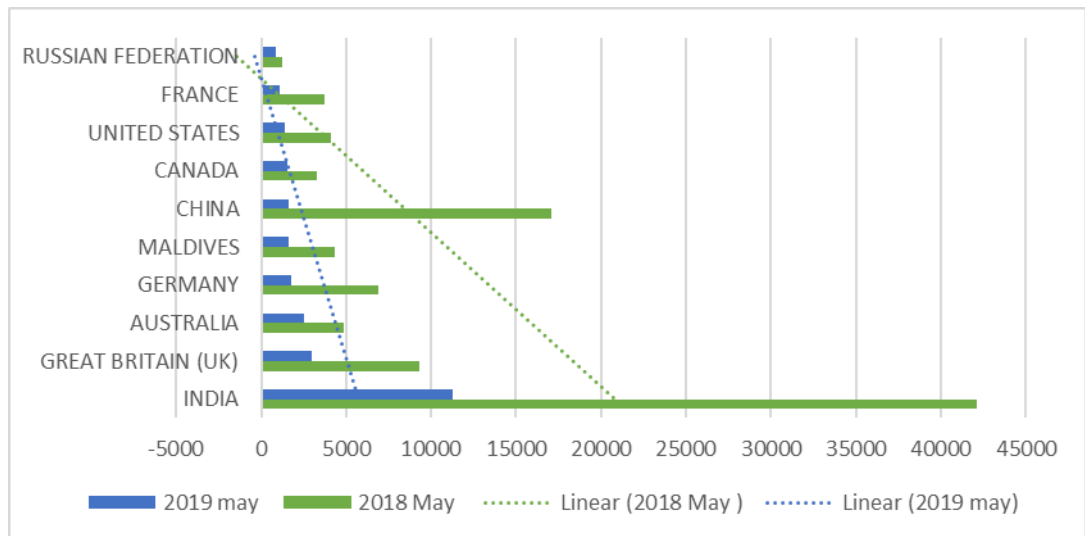


tourism arrival declined after the terrorist attack in June there is an increase that could be identified compared to arrivals in May. The reason for this upward shift

from May to June was Sri Lanka Tourism authority taken to ensure the safety and security of tourists and outlines strategic plans to rebuild tourism stakeholder confidence to ensure the vital recovery of the tourism industry. And the immediate aftermath of the attack’s arranged their emergency response protocol; trained teams were deployed to the affected hotels, all hospitals, and the airport to ensure that all tourists directly affected by the attacks received all the care, attention and assistance they needed.

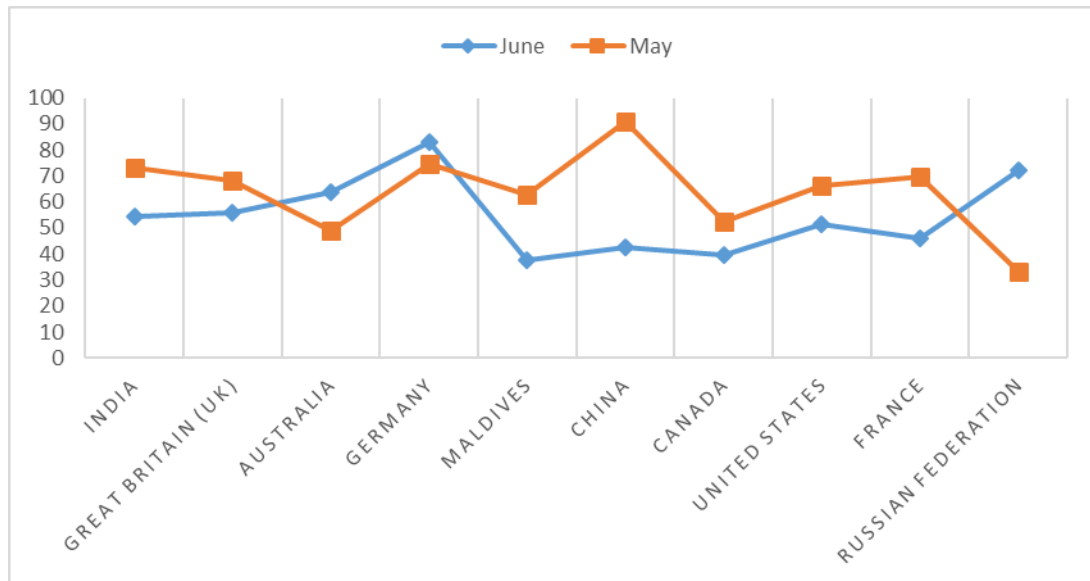
Figure.3 Tourist Arrivals from January to June
Source: Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority

Figure 3 also emphasized even the short term recovery procedure of the Sri Lankan government the forecast model says there is certainties decline of tourism



continuously. Here the data represent model with 80 % of R²

Figure.4 Sri Lanka’s international tourist generating markets
Source: Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority



In May, the largest market source for tourists was India, followed by the United Kingdom and Australia. After the terrorist attack, Sri Lanka has lost some market opportunities for tourism at international level. Compare to 2018 May the Arrivals from India, Germany and China were declined respectively 90.7%, 74.4, % and 73.3% in 2019 May. It can be pointed out as a very big loss to Sri Lanka. Even though because of the government recovery procedure several countries responded positively to the tourism sector. But some countries still have a fear of safety and security in Sri Lanka's tourism sector.

Figure.5 Sri Lanka's international tourist arrival % changes in May & June in 2019

Figure 5 shows the declining percentage of tourist arrival from Sri Lanka's top ten markets. It's clear that most all the countries' tourist arrival to Sri Lanka declined is more than 35% in May. But then in the following month, June decline rate were reduced except three countries in the top 10 market. The countries are Australia, Germany & Russian Federation. These countries show a continue to decline in tourism arrivals to Sri Lanka.

The Ministry of tourism and Christianity affairs implement some short term strategies to wake up from the sudden fall by the Easter Sunday Attack effect on tourism,

In the immediate aftermath of the attack's we rolled out our emergency response protocol; trained teams were deployed to the affected hotels, all hospitals, and the airport to ensure that all tourists directly affected by the attacks received the all the care, attention and assistance they needed

Sri Lanka Tourism addressed the tourism community at the prestigious 5 the UNWTO World Forum on Gastronomy Tourism in San Sabastian, Spain from 1-2nd of May,

Sri Lanka Convention Bureau has been present at IMEX in Frankfurt from the 21st to the 23rd of May.

The only tourism and travel fair in Sri Lanka, Sancharaka Udawa, held on 7 and 8 June. This unique exhibition, now in its ninth edition is open to all businesses within the local tourism ecosystem and is organized by Sri Lanka Association of Tour Operators (SAITO) in collaboration with the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau (SLTPB).

The 14th edition of The Lanka Challenge which flagged off on the 20th of April successfully concluded on the 27th of April at Suriya Resort Waikkaka. This event was organized by a Large Minority in association with Connaissance de Ceylon and sponsored by the Ministry of Tourism and Sri Lankan Airlines.

However, one could not be able on its own image on tourism and those kinds of short recovery period strategies According to the World Economic Forum there is a need for security protocols, which would enable destinations and countries to recover in a faster manner provided the protocols are well created and implemented correctly (World Economic Forum: 2015). One of the major factors in implementing the above is to start the security protocol as soon as possible instead of letting time pass. Crisis protocols, recovery strategies, strong emergency plans are indispensable for nations to recover faster. In order to resolve all issues or the majority of the issues following a terrorist attack, partnering with other nations is a key factor in such an emergency situation (World Economic Forum: 2015)

The findings concluded that even the government following some quick recovery procedure to control the short term fluctuations the country must move on to the stable short term and long terms strategies as well as the emergency recovery plans for coming years. so the following discussion analyzes the recovery strategies from a theoretical and then from a practical point of view. In order to reduce negative effects, governments should establish crisis recovery strategies that are meant to recover faster from a crisis situation case of terrorism. Several crisis frameworks to have a better understanding of crisis stages and present recovery strategies for each stage.

Stage Model of a Tourism Crisis

The World Tourism Organization proposed the crisis management model named the stages after a crisis. According to them, a number of strategies can be taken in order to recover from a decline in demand, ensuring that the number of tourists 'visits return to *normality*: *normality means* reaching similar demand as before the crisis occurred. They emphasize that this normality is recovered by managing media and tourist reactions. Here the communication plays a major role to recover tourism from a crisis. How the crisis and warning portrayed by the media will

determine the demand for tourism in the post-crisis period. (WTO, 1998:156, as cited in Scott et al.: 2008)

Fink and Roberts Framework Model of a Tourism Crisis

Fink (1986) and Roberts (1994) suggested a linear approach that aims to provide a framework for crisis management. It is a distinct model. It analyzes the different stages of crisis

pre-event

prodromal

Emergency Intermediate

long term and Resolution

Faulkner Tourism Crisis Management Framework

Faulkner (2001) argues that in order to recover from each stage mentioned in Fink (1986) and Roberts (1994) recovery strategies need to express clear procedures to overcome them. He combines crisis frameworks with recovery strategies to create the most extensive general framework for tourism crisis management. He also how to react properly in each stage of a crisis and gives an insight into management responses. This model comprises seven stages, it is mainly divided into three parts: the pre-event which stands before the crisis, the prodromal, emergency, intermediate and long term (recovery) which takes place during short and long term after the crisis and the resolution which reviews the outcome after a crisis has passed. The model indicates possible management actions and tasks that can be used at each stage as part of a crisis and recovery.

The practical point of view base on Sri Lanka

In Sri Lanka, the tourism strategy for short term recovery was much good response in the tourism sector in the recent two months. Despite the tourism authority and government some challenges and problems regarding crisis management in the recovery process.

The Risk assessment: Evaluation of potential risks and threats. The Sri Lanka government still not sure about the existence of the ISIL partners in Sri Lanka. There is a certain amount of chance for another attack.

Prioritization: Rank order of actions that need to be taken according to their importance. The safety of tourists has a high priority. But in Sri Lanka government and tourism-related authorities highly concentrate on the decline in income. Therefore they proposed many strategies to increase the amount of the tourist by attractive packages and visa procedure. So here the main part of the security concern considered less or was given low priority.

Protocols: Agreed rules of conduct are drafted by emergency agencies and tourism organizations. The rules are accepted by all parties to ensure recovery. But in the case of Sri Lanka coordination between authorities is a difficult one. Because the political parties especially the opposite group mostly disagree with the rules of the emergency agencies.

Disaster management command center: a center of command is crucial. Even Sri Lanka have the separate ministry of Defence there are so many problems and procedure in giving protocols.

Media and monitoring activities: it is imperative to create a central source of communication in order to guarantee that inaccurate information is not published as well as to coordinate the recovery. The media is a key element during a disaster maintaining tourists informed during a crisis as well as in the recovery stage by delivering information about the recovery process (safety and services of the destination). In the case of Sri Lanka, all negative thoughts of the attacks were spread through the media was biased to some of the political and influential groups. So they use the media as a source to spread the violence among the people.

Warning systems: Warning systems need to be in place to communicate effectively when a crisis is occurring. Before the Easter Sunday attack, there was certain information came to the Defence authorities but they have neglected that information.

Flexibility: Some elements can be applied to all emergencies, therefore, they are part of a crisis framework. However, flexibility is important since certain emergencies may require different strategies. Organizations may also have to carry out new or different tasks than they are used, which might require a higher level of flexibility. But still, the Sri Lanka government try to strict its rules and regulation.

Involvement, education, and review: Stakeholders who will implement the strategy need to be involved in the process in order for the strategy to be effective. The strategy has to be continuously updated, to constantly offer new information, in particular after a crisis has been overcome in order to assess if something can be improved. In Sri Lanka, only implementation procedure only considered by the government but evaluation handover to the second level of the hierarchy. So inefficiency and management related problems will not show good and accurate results. So the evaluation efficiency should be enhanced with higher technologies.

Sri Lanka should follow a proper strategic approach to get a ride of the Easter Sunday attack. The above three approaches can be used to recover from the Easter Sunday attack.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, terrorism acts will most likely never be or avoidable leaving no destination immune to a terrorist crisis. Fortunately, they are relatively rare occurrences and governments as well as tourism organizations has the ability to reduce their impact through the use as well as the development of recovery strategies. It is important to learn the responses from destinations that have been affected by terrorist attacks in the past in order to see if their implemented recovery strategies were effective. Effective strategies can then be used by another destination facing a similar terrorist attack in the future order to develop their own recovery strategy. in Sri Lanka bounce back and revive after an Easter Sunday attack is ever important while we working towards tourism growth and development. So the government and the related authorities should give a keen interest in the implementation recovery strategic approach.

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