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Impact of Tourism Industry on Employment in the Maldives Impact of the tourism industry on employment in the Maldives

Tourism forms the largest economic contributor to the country of Maldives. The sector plays a critical role in generating invisible income through foreign returns and securing jobs to both locals and international citizens. The Maldives' tourism positively affects the economy of the nation through employment opportunities that generates returns to the government and the entire country. Most of the tourism report published in the past one year points out that almost 11% of the total population of Maldives community is absorbed in the tourism industry with approximate returns that go beyond \$500. Moreover, the nation generates up to 60% of its tourists revenue from foreign exchange earnings (Gautam, 2008; WTTC, 2002).

The World Bank of report (2014), clarifies that Maldives is mainly predominant of tourism products such as floating beds thereby, offering direct employment both directly and indirectly to the tourism industry in the world. By creating job opportunities to the youths who works in hotels and other tourism sectors, the nation improves its economic growth. In essence, in the past one decade, tourism related occupations sustainably helped Maldivian gross domestic product to shoot up to 265 percent. However, the availability of jobs to Maldivian citizens comes with a challenge. Because most of the employment opportunities are concentrated around resort regions, therefore, majority are forced to travel from upcountry to urban centers and such a migration pattern cause strain to urban settlements that already has an influx in population resulting into tension to the economy

around town centers.

Maldives is not only famous for its natural beauty of green ocean, and sandy beaches, the nation's employment opportunities in hotels focuses extremely on tourism workforce who are represented by tourism workforce association (Ellis, 2008; Sharpley, 2002). The workforce recommends that the majority of employees earn very little amount of money while living in very poor conditions susceptible to much less production than what is required by nation per capita. In addition, employment opportunity within the tourism industry alone is not enough to sustain the national grid while the country also lacks other alternative mineral resources. Such a result has made poverty levels to remain quite high throughout the nation (Secretariat, 2010).

Maldives fishing sector employs almost 25% of the total national workforce. Through the same industry, employees do get deployed into sectors such as packaging, preparation and transport that also act as part of the development to growth domestic product (GDP) (Shareef et al. 2008). Up to 1200 species of fish are available within Maldives, of which the most important is the tuna species that accounts to 90% of the national export. Involvement of employment opportunity towards processing and export of tuna improves the fisheries sector that in turn translates to economic growth of the nation.

Shakeela (2013), argue that employment trend of Maldives over the past three years shows a high rate of revenue collection from the tourism industry, but the country still ends up spending more than it can generate.

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The above situation is being driven by level of uncertainty and the influx of people who are mostly over dependent on tourism as the only source of livelihood.

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