

## **KNOWLEDGE ON SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT POLICIES AMONG HOTELIERS IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCE, SRI LANKA**

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Awareness on Solid Waste Management (SWM) policies among hoteliers in the central province of Sri Lanka was assessed and a positive hint could be observed towards sustainable development of the tourism sector in the country. With the rapid surge in number of hotels being promoted and the increase of improvements in related utilities of the tourism sector in the island, the potential to increase the generation of solid waste and expected environmental impacts are high. However, the industrial SWM processes has long been legally overseen and monitored through the Environmental Protection Licence (EPL) scheme by the central environmental authority. The aim of this study was to assess the awareness of the hoteliers in the central province on policies and accepted practices (as per the 3R concept) of SWM. A survey was carried out by distributing a questionnaire among the managers of 30 prescribed hotels under the EPL Category-A as per the published gazette (Extraordinary) notifications under National Environmental Act No. 47 of 1980 and its subsequent amendments. The survey was conducted in November 2013 and multiple choice questionnaire regarding background, SWM practices, and understandings about the SWM policies were asked. Hotels were categorized as per star rating. Responds were assessed through a scoring system 1 through 5 and Percentage Awareness Score (PAS) was determined for each category. The results were analysed using SigmaPlot© for Windows Version 10.0 Build 10.0.0.54 through plotting graphs to observe the relationships between PAS and the hotel categories. There were 15 hotels in *Kandy*, 8 in *Matale*, and 7 in *Nuwara Eliya* districts; many of those have considerable visitor occupancy in the peak seasons of the year. Most of the respondents were males and their professional and educational qualifications were mostly above or equal to master's level. The average PAS was high (>82%) in hotels with star ratings, whereas the non-star rated hotels have scored >65%. The visitor occupancy showed a significant ( $p<0.05$ ) and positive relationship with the obtained PAS. The prevailing legal requirements to have a proper SWM system plus the guest demand for environmentally sound hotel practices would be the closest reasons to show a higher PAS in the highly occupied and star rated hotels. Higher education profiles of the senior managers could be another cause behind the scores. Results of this study proved that the legal enforcement, eco-friendly client demands, and good educational backgrounds could influence towards the sustainable development in Sri Lanka.