

# IMPACT OF SEASANALITY ON TOURISM AND HOSPILALITY INDUSTRY AFFTER THE CIVIL UNREST- A CASE STUDY OF JAFFNA DISTRICT IN SRI LANKA

Mr.P.Sasitharan  
*University of Jaffna*  
[stpsasi4@gmail.com](mailto:stpsasi4@gmail.com)

Ms.S.Mathivathany  
*Vavuniya Campus of University of Jaffna*  
[newvathana@gmail.com](mailto:newvathana@gmail.com)

## Abstract

Sri Lanka is fastest growing tourism sector and its regions are developing and encouraging the tourism sector with an abundance of natural and cultural tourist attractions. Seasonality has main roles in tourism development which is seen as a temporal imbalance in the phenomenon which is into two forms like natural and institutional. Seasonality has become one of the most distinctive and a determinative feature of global tourism industry and also which is has been considered as a crucial problem for the tourism industry and many difficulties faced. After the civil unrest, Jaffna is a Rapid growing district of the country in tourism sectors but seasonality in demand presents some difficulties. Therefore, this research is trying to explore the impact of seasonality tourism in the Jaffna tourism sector. Further it has used the mix method approach which includes qualitative Method and quantitative research methods. Seasonality is makes good opportunity to bring tourists and income to our region. However, which is produce some of the biggest social, Economic and cultural challenges to Jaffna District. This study will help to tourism developers, planners, designers and other sectoral experts of the country.

**Key Words: Tourism Development, Destinations, Economic and Cultural Challenges, Tourism Industry**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism sector in many countries is seen as a main instrument for regional development which stimulates new economic activities. Sri Lanka is also fastest growing tourism sector and its regions are developing and encouraging the tourism sector with an abundance of natural and cultural tourist attractions. Seasonality has main roles in tourism development in Jaffna district which is seen as a temporal imbalance in the phenomenon. It can be conveyed such elements in terms of dimensions like numbers and expenditure of visitors, traffic on highways and other forms of transportation, employment, and admissions to attractions view. These are most significant aspects of seasonality which involve the concentration of tourist flows in relatively short periods of the year.

Seasonality can be divided into two forms like natural and institutional. Natural seasonality stands for natural variations of air and water temperature, level of rain or snowfall, amount of sunlight which associates with annual seasons and especially affects remote and peripheral destinations. Destinations with warm and cold climate are exposed to seasonal changes, due to different activities offered for tourists depending on climate and season. Institutional seasonality is caused by human actions taken on social, ethnical, organizational, religious and other basis. The dates of institutional seasonality can be established more precise, as it often corresponds with school or public holidays, religious events or pilgrimage, celebration or conduction of various events and festivals, hunting and etc. Fashion and social preferences can cause this form of seasonality (Butler, 1994).

Tourism as an integral part of global business is highly dependent on seasonal changes due to the climatic conditions, economic activities as well as human behavior and the society in general. Thus seasonality has become one of the most distinctive and determinative features of global tourism industry. Seasonality has been considered as a crucial problem for the tourism industry and many difficulties faced. In particular, seasonality affects the number of tourists to a region and therefore can threaten the viability of businesses in a region. For instance, seasonality can place great pressure on tourism enterprises and their business staffs.

Jaffna district was the heart of the cultural places and historical backgrounds, natural and manmade aspects for the tourism attractiveness of Sri Lanka. After the civil unrest, it is a Rapid growing district of the country in tourism sectors. Seasonality in demand presents opportunities to rural destinations. However this research is trying to explore the impact of seasonality tourism in the Jaffna tourism sector, especially that employment, income, efficient utilization of infrastructures, emigration of population and deficit of social capital and quality of life.

## 2. STUDY AREA

Jaffna District is one of the 25 administrative centers in the country which is located in the far north of Sri Lanka. It has an area of 1,025 square kilometers (396 sq. mi). It is divided into four areas geographically which are Thenmaradchchy, Vadamaradchchy, Valikamam and Jaffna Islands. Jaffna District is divided into 15 Divisional Secretariats divisions which has enormous potential for development including huge seasonally background for tourism and hotel industry.

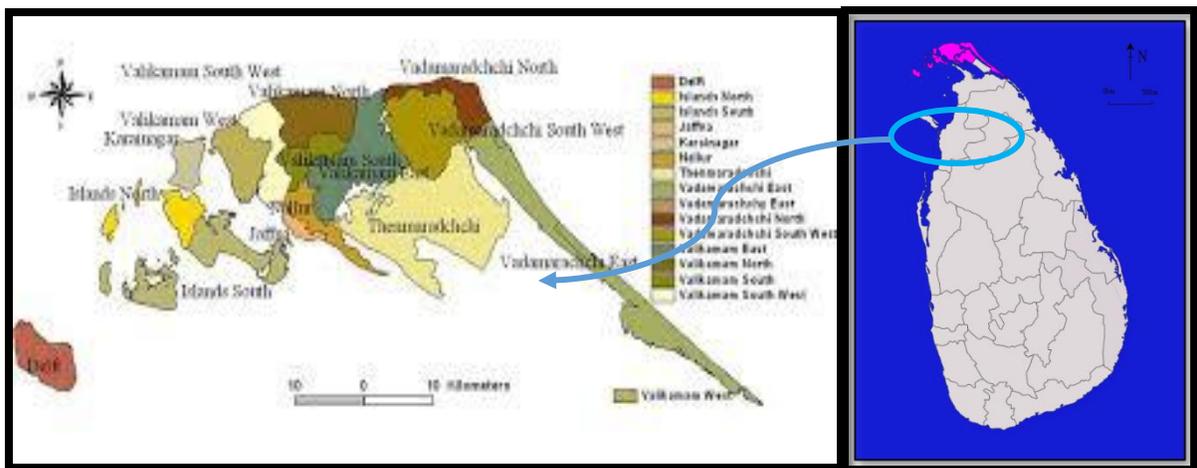


Figure: 1, Map of the Jaffna District

Source: Jaffna District Secretariat, 2017

### 3. RESEARCH PROBLEM

After the instability of the country, Jaffna is a rapid growing district of the country in tourism sector. Jaffna district has a suitable climate, topographical features, historical background, cultural specialty and good scenic view point but seasonality presents a number of issues that require special attention and strategies. In particular, seasonality affects the number of tourists to a region and which can threaten the viability of businesses in a region and also seasonality has been considered as a crucial problem to that region. Therefore, this research is trying to study how affect the seasonality on the tourism and hospitality industry in Jaffna District.

### 4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Seasonality in demand presents opportunities to rural destinations, particularly where their economy balances tourism alongside other activities. Therefore main objective of this research is to study the impact of seasonally on tourism and hospitality sector after the civil unrest in the Jaffna District of Sri Lanka. Further, following three objectives are selected to make detail study through this research.

- a. To identify the Potentials for Seasonal tourism of study area.
- b. To explore the impact of Seasonality on Tourism and Hospitality sector of study area.
- c. To make recommendation to fill the gap of the sector.

### 5. LITERATURE REVIEW

Seasonality and its related social, economic and environmental impacts are major roles in the tourism industry. Recently various literatures are available in national and international level.

Table: 01, Literatures regarding the study

| Authors & Year         | Main themes   |
|------------------------|---|
| Hartman, 1986          | Natural and “institutionalized” factors are considered as the main causes for tourism seasonality   |
| Baum & Lundtrop, 2001  | Tourism as an integral part of global business is highly dependent on seasonal changes.   |
| Butler 1994            | The concept of tourism seasonality can be defined as temporal imbalance in the phenomenon of tourism.   |
| Baum and Hagen 1999    | Impacts of seasonality depend on the location of the destination and the location of the tourism enterprise within a destination.   |
| Murphy 1985            | Seasonality is not necessarily bad for everyone, and it goes on to add that, to some communities, the end of the tourist season is regarded as the light at the end of the tunnel |
| Higham and Hinch, 2002 | Seasonality can have advantages when an ecological and socio-cultural perspective is taken, as the off peak season provides a time to recover                                     |
| Bar On, 1975           | Systematic demand fluctuations are considered as a problem, which has to be counteracting in order to reduce and to modify the effects  |

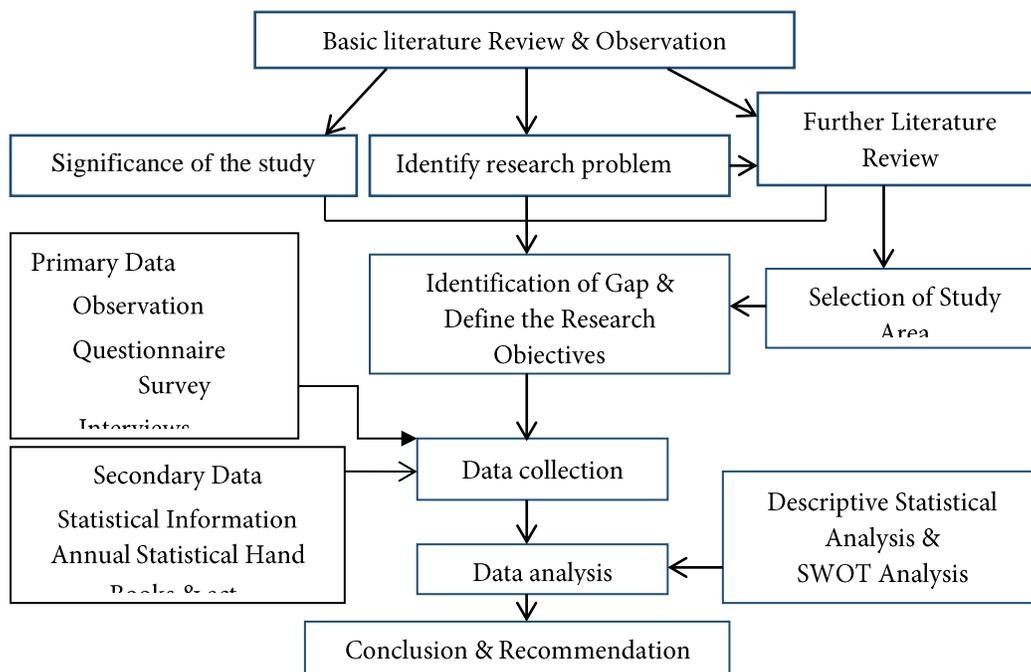
Source: Compiled by author

The literatures articulate that the tourism as an integral part of global business is highly dependent on seasonal changes in climatic conditions, economic activities as well as human behavior and the society in general as well it mostly affect the tourism and hospitality industry in various ways.

## 6. METHODOLOGY

The research design and strategy described the way of addressing each steps of the research work. This description will give the clear picture about design of the research to fulfill the objectives. This study has used the mix method approach which includes Qualitative Method and quantitative research methods. Qualitative method of the research was involved conducting semi-structured interviews and discussion informed by the investigative. Further different interview was conducted by researcher to different tourism related institutions to increase the credibility of the research work. Quantitative Methods were used for the analysis of the collected data for instance questionnaire data analyzed through the quantitative method.

**Figure: 02, Methodological Framework**



Source: Author, 2017

Primary data were collected by observation, interview and Questionnaire. Thorough the observation, visiting around the city hotels , Beach resorts and Important destination sites with friends and alone with covering the city Centre, neighborhood and seasonal destination site areas which was highlighted the particular problems faced by Seasonally of Jaffna. Secondary data were collected through the documents review. Tourism statistical hand book, other District annual Statistical Hand books and Resource Profile were used as secondary data from various departments. The study was mainly an exploratory character.

SWOT analysis was applied to identify the current situation of the seasonally, its strength, weakness, opportunities and threats in tourism and hospitality industry. Basic descriptive statistical analysis was applied to analyze the collected questionnaires' data.

## 7. RESULT AND FINDINGS

Jaffna district is fondly called "Entrance of North" and is a perfect gateway for those seeking to be in harmony with nature. Jaffna District has a unique geographical advantage with a flat topography and is a leading tourist destination. Beaches are a well-known tourist spot in this district. Nallur festival attracts domestic and foreign tourists during the festival months. Foremost of the attractions is the fascinating town of Jaffna, with its absorbing mixture of colonial charm and vibrant Tamil culture, while the Jaffna Peninsula and surrounding islands offer a string of remote temples, Hindu and Buddhist alike, beaches and more off-beat attractions.

Town has its own unique and complex identity shaped in true Sri Lankan fashion, by a wide cross-section of influences, including Muslim, Portuguese, Dutch, British and Sinhalese, with colorful temples set next to huge churches, and streets dotted with ancient Dutch and British residences. The rural surroundings of the Jaffna town, and the source of much of its former prosperity, is the Jaffna Peninsula, a fertile arc of land crisscrossed with small country roads lined with endless walled gardens and smallholdings, growing a wide variety of crops including chilies, onions, bananas, jackfruit and grapes.

Pleasant climate of the district makes it an ideal place for holidaying. Nature enthusiasts will find Jaffna reaches all their requirements, with a variety of trek and trail options, allowing the enticing breeze to release feelings of peacefulness. Those looking for a relaxing getaway from the hot plains will also be more than satisfied, taking in the cultural diversity and beautiful sights around them. These are the potentials for the seasonality tourism sector in Jaffna District. Further the following table clearly marked the SWOT analysis of the seasonally in tourism and hospitality sector of Jaffna.

Table: 02, SWOT Analysis on seasonally in tourism and hospitality sector of Jaffna.

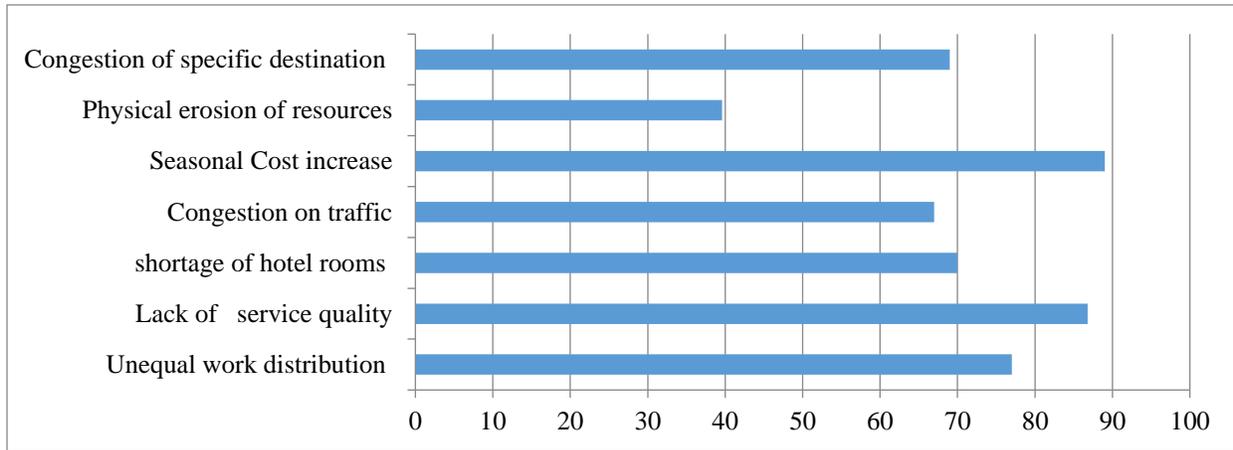
| <b>Strength</b>   | <b>Weakness</b>   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Offers a variety of local heritage and indigenous attractions to outdoor and nature exploring opportunities</li> <li>*Climate is an advantage over other closer competitors</li> <li>*Geographic location offers many opportunities for seasonality activities</li> <li>*Several elevated viewpoints</li> <li>*Tourism Development Courses &amp; Training</li> <li>*High inflow of foreign remittances</li> <li>*District less natural disasters</li> <li>*The good relationship among western countries and other districts</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Lack of awareness of the city as a tourist destination</li> <li>* No direct international flights to Jaffna</li> <li>*Limited Local Flights facilities.</li> <li>*Perceived as desirable destination (Ocean, gardens, beaches, lagoons)</li> <li>*High prices for airfare, accommodation and tourist attractions</li> <li>*Lack of proper plans and guidelines for tourism development based on seasonality</li> <li>*Unskilled HRD and Poor Service Standards</li> <li>*Weak public sector management</li> <li>*Imperfect image of SL during last three decades</li> </ul> |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| *Available Natural Resources for large and small tourism industry<br>*Good historical background<br>Seasonally festivals  | *Poor infrastructure facilities (transport, tele communication, quality of Hotels)<br>*Cultural norms and stick religious customs   |
| <b>Threats</b>  | <b>Opportunities</b>  |
| *Increase unemployment levels & Unsafely job<br>*Hazard effect on seasonally<br>*Lack of Working Situation due to instability of the internal political, High security zones<br>*Bad images about the affected areas<br>*International policies about Sri Lanka | *Increase awareness through tour operators<br>*Financial times & strategy for promotion of tourism by government & others<br>* Increase the service standards<br>*Introducing Tourism Education and degree program<br>*Increasing of inter-regional developmental programs<br>*Establishing the provincial head offices<br>*Private and Foreign investment opportunity<br>* Preparing the Tourism policy and plans by Government and other institutions<br>* Conducting the international conferences and trade fares |

Source: Author

The importance of ensuring seasonality takes high positive impact on tourism services to develop international tourism which is well-recognized. It is particularly important in the case of Jaffna District to promote tourism as an instrument for economic development. It can, however, be achieved only by initiating specific measures for seasonality employment, business and income, in various segments of the tourism industry. Participant observation method revealed the following key points related to seasonality: (Figure: 03)

- Unequal work distribution through the season
- Lowering service quality
- Confrontation between high-season and full-time workers
- Seasonal fluctuations may cause a shortage of hotel rooms in the peak season
- Congestion on traffic, on the access to commercial services, queues for service
- Increases in the costs of services and goods
- Effect of higher prices, the quality of life can be low
- Increase of states that extra facilities and extra services
- Physical erosion of footpath and other natural resources
- Disturbance of wildlife
- Congestion of specific destination lanes or routes
- heavy use of the natural environment during the peak season



**Figure: 03, Impacts of the seasonal tourism in Jaffna**

Source: Author, 2017

Seasonal effects can be grouped into three main following categories in the Jaffna district:

- ✓ Economic impacts
- ✓ Socio-cultural impacts and
- ✓ Ecological impacts

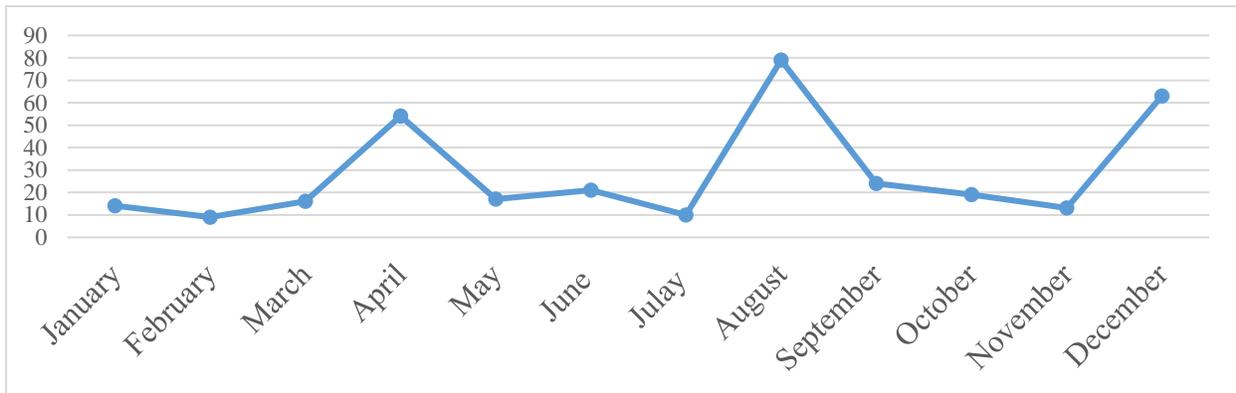
Economic impact of tourism seasonality deals with problems in the off peak periods, especially the loss of profits due to the inefficient use of resources and facilities and that businesses and communities need to attain sufficient revenues from a few busy weeks in the summer, in order to ensure success for the whole year. In this situation, it is difficult to attract investors or lenders from the private sector and investment from public authorities may thus prove necessary.

The accommodation services, the seasonal fluctuations may cause a shortage of hotel rooms in the peak season and underutilization of facilities in the off-peak season of the Jaffna district. Seasonality has an important impact on employment. The most important issue is the difficulty in recruiting and retaining full-time staff and related to this, there is the difficult to maintain product and quality standards. From another perspective, there are also positive economic effects of seasonality. For instance, maintenance work on buildings or attractions is a typical activity to do in the off-peak periods. Market hotels in the accommodation sector have not been very successful in attaining usage efficiency, because they are not open all year round for business and so that they are unable to keep their highly skilled staff. On employment sector, seasonality can offer opportunities of temporary jobs to some people, such as students, artists, housewives and also farmers that provide farmhouse accommodation during touristic season, might not only receive increased revenues, but also a higher status.

Socio-cultural impacts include effects on both the crowd community and tourists, this focuses on impacts relating to the local community in the Jaffna district. During the peak period local people can suffer problems of congestion on traffic, on the access to commercial services, queues for service, and especially in significant increases in the costs of services and goods. As an effect of higher prices, the quality of life can be low. Another relevant issue linked to the higher number of people present during the peak season is the increase of states that extra facilities and extra services are required (e.g. extra police, sanitary, health, accommodation, and Transport and park personnel) in order to

maintain an acceptable level of local services. Usually the amount raised from the local tax base and central government grants is not sufficient, because this is calculated in relation to the resident population.

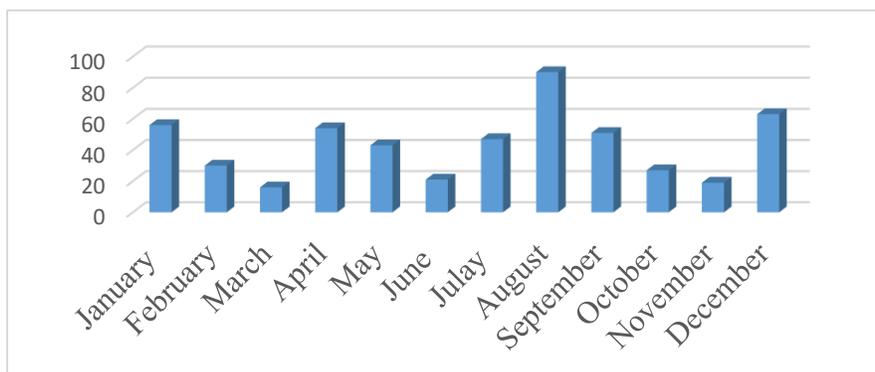
Environmental impacts are largely synonymous with negative effects occurring due to the concentration of visitors during the peak season at destinations of the research area. These effects are well known physical erosion of footpath and other natural resources, litter problems, disturbance of wildlife, and congestion of rural lanes. The heavy use of the natural environment during the peak season impacts on the ecological carrying capacity of a destination. Jaffna town areas with high peak usage may be in the long run better off than having the use spread more evenly throughout the year. Furthermore, that the lengthy dead season is the only chance for the ecological and the social environment to recover fully. Seasonally tourist highly increase some of months in yearly in Jaffna district, those period mostly influence with institutional seasonal which is mean mainly school vacation.



**Figure: 04, Mostly effected period seasonality on tourism and hospitality sector in Jaffna**

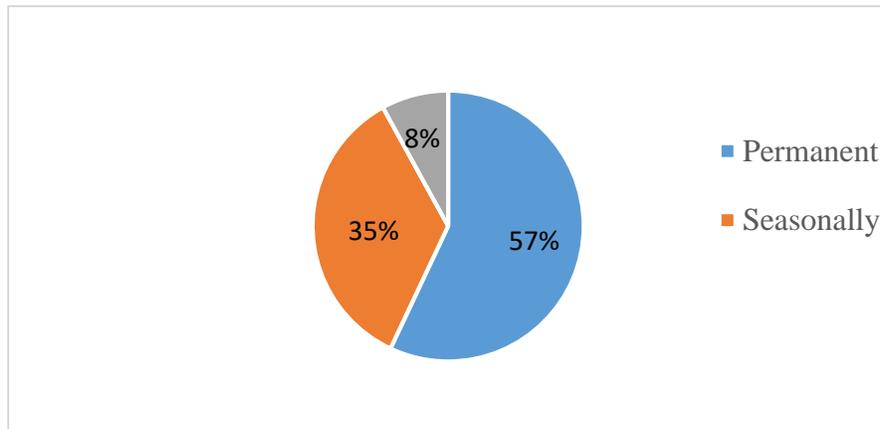
Source: Author, 2017

The above figure 4 clearly show the month of August highly influence on seasonally furthermore the month of April and December also most influence on seasonally.



**Figure: 05, Employment levels of seasonally on tourism and Hospitality industry**

Based on the above figure seasonally employment mostly increased the month of August and in March very less tourists are visiting for their tourism purposes.



**Figure: 06, Employment pattern of Seasonality on the tourism and hospitality sector in Jaffna District**

Source: Author, 2017

## 8. CONCLUSION

Seasonality is makes good opportunity to bring tourists and income to our region. However, which is produce some of the biggest social, Economic and cultural challenges to Jaffna District. The tourism market has been unable to absorb growing number of school leavers in recent years as a result of bias towards white-collar work, skills mismatch to the type of jobs available and their lack of experience in employment. Seasonal tourism companies and its related aspects are facing more challenges than those operating all- year round. The following aspects are identified by Author such as,

- Poor working conditions at resorts and Limited Training Opportunities
- Quality of skills at secondary school level too low for tourism
- Limited management skills and expertise amongst people
- Inaccessibility of remote resorts to island communities
- Insufficient local (female) Employees and Youth lacks work ethic and commitment
- Little cooperation between private sector and central Government.
- Tourism industry not diversified through all sectors of Jaffna societies, Resorts not acceptable place of work for women and community
- Voluntary unemployment
- Lack of consistent and planned implementation capacity, Weak enforcement of policy and regulations, Limited Training Opportunities
- Lack of regional tourism training plan and strategies
- Communication challenge to be overcome all tourists and inefficient language skills
- The high standard should be supported by new methodologies and teaching practices in order to prepare future professionals for the tourism industry.

## **9. RECOMMENDATION ON IMPROVING SEASONAL TOURISM IN JAFFNA DISTRICT**

Seasonality tourism has become one of the major sectors of the economy in Jaffna district. Contributing to a small proportion of the National Income and generating significant employment opportunities. They are categorized under four themes namely, places, events, recreational services and other services. Historic Places and Buildings, Parks, Natural Areas or features and beaches, and religious centres are identified as tourism places but religious festivals, special events and programs, annual sports meets, seasonal fruits, sea foods and vegetables marketing and other special items should be clearly developed and introduced in regular manner. The following aspects should be developed for the hospitality and tourism development with the strategic based on seasonality.

Due to fast developing tourism industry, especially when building new resorts in Jaffna destinations, important to overcome the Seasonal affection the tourism and hospitality industry in the Jaffna district. Suggestions can be used to maintain sustainable employment and training the employees in tourism sector. Thus, the usefulness in working life of tourism businesses experiencing seasonality is evident, but it would be suggested to SMEs lacking HR department and distributing related responsibilities between the departments, to ensure better employer-employee relations. The suggestions and techniques can be used not only in seasonal hospitality employment, but also in any business experiencing seasonal demand.

The importance of ensuring high standards of quality and efficiency in tourism services to develop international tourism should be well-recognized particularly human resources development needs of the Jaffna Tourism sector work force and service standard should be increased with proper HRD mechanism. It is particularly important in the case of Jaffna District intending to promote seasonality tourism as an instrument for economic development. It can, however, be achieved only by initiating specific measures for human resource development in various segments of the tourism industry.

Sourcing the channels offering candidates looking only for seasonal employment should be used, for instance, graduate students, or current hospitality students, looking for internships. In that case, cooperation with educational institutions should be developed to a greater extent. The existing tourism and hospitality skill levels of study area should be developed by the respective hospitality and tourism organizations specially Work force and service standard. The hospitality industry depends greatly on the services of employees. The hospitality industry especially hotels should be highly diversified with multi-cultural work environment.

In order for the seasonality tourism development system and plans to be effective, the approach of the organization to seasonality tourism development should be positive in Jaffna. There should be a climate of learning. Strategies of the organization and seasonally tourism development should be concordant in Jaffna Hospitality organizations and hotels. The organization must be focus on continual changes and continual learning and employ team-work methods.

It is needed to clarify what works are carried out in the organization and it is necessary to look whether the training of new employees, organization of career and reserve, professional development and re-skilling are carried out, whether there is adaptation system in the organization. This point should be deeply connected with seasonally tourism development and its evaluation.

The success of Seasonal tourism development system activity depends on HR development employees and their approach. So evaluation should be begun with a clear identification of the purpose or results expected from the training programs and other HRD programs. Local employment should be considered with anticipated new resorts to become operational.

There must be created the infrastructural structure such as road network, railway, telecommunication, high stars hotels, restaurants, data information system, water supply, electricity and popular accommodations with very attraction. Well plans and guidelines, disaster mitigation strategies and special health care campaign and security system should be implemented for the tourism industry and regional development.

## **References**

- Butler, R.W. 1994. *Seasonality in Tourism: Issues and Implications*, Seasonality in tourism. Edited by Baum and Lundtorp. Elsevier Science Ltd, Oxford. CA: Sage.
- Chalkiti, K., Sigala, M., 2009. *Staff Turnover in the Greek Tourism Industry: A comparison between insular and peninsular regions*. Emerald Group Publishing Limited
- Hinch, T. D., Hickey, G. P., & Jackson, E. L. 2001. *Seasonal Visitation at Fort Edmonton Park: An Empirical Analysis Using a Leisure Constraints Framework*.
- Ismert, M., Petrick, J.F. 2004. *Indicators and Standards of Quality Related to Seasonal Employment in the Ski Industry*. *Journal of Travel Research*, 43
- Ball, R.M. (1988) 'Seasonality: A Problem for Workers in the Tourism Labour Market', *Service Industries Journal*, 8(4): 501-513.
- BarOn, R. (1975) *Seasonality in tourism: a guide to the analysis of seasonality and trends for policy making*. Economist Intelligence Unit, Technical Series No. 2, London.
- Mourdoukoutas, P. (1988) 'Seasonal Employment, Seasonal Unemployment and Unemployment Compensation', *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, 47(3): 315-329.
- Kim, J. H. & Moosa, I. (2001). *Seasonal behavior of monthly international tourist flows: specification and implications for forecasting models*. *Tourism Economics*, 7 (4): 381-396.
- Koenig, N. & Bischoff, E.E. (2005). *Seasonality: The State of The Art*. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 7, 201-219.
- Kulendran, N. (1996). *Modeling quarterly tourist flows to Australia using co integration analysis*. *Tourism Economics*, 2 (3): 203-222.
- Gustafson, P. (2002). *Tourism and Seasonal Retirement Migration*, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 29 (4): 899-918.
- McEniff, J. (1992). *Seasonality of tourism demand in the European Community*. *EIU Travel & Tourism Analyst*, 3: 67-88.
- Cannas R.,(2012) *An Overview of Tourism Seasonality: Key Concepts and Policies*. *Alma Tourism N. 5(40-83)*