

Potentials and Problems of Using Religious Places for Urban Recreational Needs : a Case Study Related to Kelaniya Buddhist Temple – Western Province, Sri Lanka.

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Abstract

A recreational activity can be defined as an activity undertaken for the pleasure, leisure or satisfaction. In highly urbanized area availability of recreational spaces are important specially because of the high population density, lack of vacant lands and environmental pollution. Under such conditions the urban environment can negatively affect the mental and physical health of their residents. Therefore, the recreational facilities have become a fundamental human need that should be facilitated in urban environment. In fulfilling the above requirements the place which are of religious and cultural values take a major position of importance. The objective of this research is identify the abilities and related problems in adapting the environ of Kelaniya temple to fulfill the urban recreational needs of the people wholives in a close proximity of highly urbanized area.

The study has been conducted with the help of both primary and secondary data. Primary data was gathered using questionnaires, field observations, interviews and focus group discussions. Altogether 60 visitors arriving at the Kelaniya temple were selected by random sampling methods. The secondary data was collected from different sources. Gathered data was analyzed by quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods.

The ability of developing the recreational needs related to Kelaniya temple site remains at a satisfactory level. This area of Kelaniyariver could be made use for water related recreational activities. Either side of the river banks and the surrounding greenery also could be adapted for outdoor passive recreational activities. This locality could also be put into the use of the purpose of meditational activity which can develop the mental relaxation of participant. Certain problems and challenges will arise in organizing recreational facilities as noted above mainly organizing the recreational center in a suitable manner appropriate to the religious site, disposing of garbage of the religious site and the problem in eliminating the beggars who are used to frequent the religious site regularly. Minimizing these problems had to be carried out without causing any inconvenience to the pilgrims who visit the temple.

Key words : recreational activity, urban, pilgrims

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