

## **A Study of Buddhist meditation practices as soft power to improve spiritual tourism in Sri Lanka**

**Rev. T. Dhammasara Thero**

Assistant Lecturer, Department of Sociology, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka  
thissamaharamayed@gmail.com

**W. M. G. N. Panampitiya**

Assistant Lecturer, Department of Sociology, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka  
gnpanampitiya@gmail.com

Soft power explains how modern states can use cultural heritage for positive attraction and persuasion to achieve global influence. Buddhism includes a unique analysis of human psychology and adaptation practices which help to the relief of some psychological problems such as anxiety, depression, stress and aggression. Buddhist meditation is a great method to release stress and acquire a peaceful mind in particularly tranquillity (*Samatha*) and Insight (*Vipassana*) meditation. Spiritual tourism is an important component in the tourism industry in any country. Thus, the main objective of this study was to identify methods of using Buddhist meditation practices to increase the attraction of foreigners into Sri Lanka. The functional method was used in this study and primary data was collected through semi-structured interviews including 8 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and *Tripitaka*. Secondary data was collected from relevant journal articles, research reports, textbooks and other academic works. The data was analyzed based on the descriptive method. Sri Lanka is a land of spiritually endowed with many places of worship, pilgrim centers and Buddhist monuments. Although, Pilgrimage Buddhist tourism is very famous all over Sri Lanka, there are very limited places related to spiritual tourism in Sri Lanka. Buddhist meditation system and techniques are more vital parts of the spiritual tourism with the help of well-skilled and knowledge of Buddhist monks in Sri Lanka. This study has an empathized importance of using Buddhist meditation practices not only for realizing the reality of life or to attain the supreme state of Nirvana for psychotherapy to get rid of psychological issues such as stress and depression. Promoting these psychotherapy values of meditation practices directly affect the improvement of foreign tourist attraction. Therefore, it is important to increase the quality of presence of international meditation centers and to enhance government and non-governmental financial provisions to spread the number of international meditation centres further to promote spiritual tourism in Sri Lanka. As well as it is significant to having formal monitoring mechanisms regarding those institutions to increase the quality of services and to establish the landmark of spiritual tourism in Sri Lanka.

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