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Poster

Potential for tourist industry in Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka

A tourist is anybody who visits another country and spends more than 24 hours, but less than one year, irrespective of travel purpose. This process involves the supply of a complex mixture of material and psychological elements which is accommodation, transportation, attractions and entertainment, fantasy or rest, recreation, educational and other social interests. The area in and around Anuradhapura is designated as one of the prime places for tourism in Sri Lanka. It has many places which attract many types of tourists.

The pilgrimage complex consists of places like Ruwanweliseya, Thuparama, the Jethawana, the Mirisawati, the Abayagiri and the Lankarama and Mihinthale. In addition, the ruins of the ancient city are visible at every corner. Therefore, this study attempts to study the opportunities for tourism in and around Anuradhapura. Objectives are, the opportunities for tourism, government policies and plans and total revenue in tourism from Anuradhapura District. The study uses both primary and secondary data: 10 tourist guides and randomly selected 20 tourists. There are very low tourist arrivals to Anuradhapura though total tourist arrivals have increased in Sri Lanka last year. There was only an increase of 2% - 4% tourist arrivals in Anuradhapura. 45% of tourists visit Anuradhapura because of its ancient ruins, and 25% of tourists visit because of the archeological environment of this old city. The climate and religious importance are not given as special reasons to visit Anuradhapura. 55% of the respondents indicated that hotel and restaurant facilities are at a sufficient level. One of the problems is that although there are enough guides, their chargers are unreasonable, language skills are weak, and it is difficult to trust information given by them. 55% agreed that chargers of tourist tickets are not in a satisfactory level. The government has a general tourism policy, but it has not taken into account the special character of the tourism industry in and around Anuradhapura. The government is expected to develop the tourism industry in Anuradhapura, for the purpose of minimizing negative externalities to Anuradhapura's socio-economic environment and maximizing its positive externalities for a sustainable development of the industry and the area in near future.

Keywords: Potential, Tourism, Material and Psychological elements of tourism, Ancient city