



**An Analysis of the Role of Cultural Tourism
on Regional Development of the North Central
Province of Sri Lanka**

By

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DECLARATION BY THE CANDIDATE

The work described in this thesis was carried out by me under the supervision of Professor (Emeritus) Mrs. Y.A.D.S. Wanasinghe, and Co-supervisor, Professor Mrs. T.M.S.P.K. Tennakoon, Department of Geography, University of Sri Jayewardenepura. This thesis has never been submitted in whole or in part to any University for a Degree or a Diploma.



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TABLE OF CONTENT

Content	Page Number
I. Table of Contents	I-IV
II. List of Tables	V-VII
III. List of Figures	VII-XI
IV. Abbreviations	XII-XIII
IV. Acknowledgment	XIV-XVI
V. Abstract	XVII-XVIII
CHAPTER ONE – Introduction	01-31
1.1. Background of the Study	01-06
1.2. Significance of the Study	06-10
1.3. Objective of the Study	11
1.4. Methodology	12-28
1.5. Limitation of the Study	28-30
1.6. Outline of the Thesis	30-31
CHAPTER TWO - Literature Review	32-129
2.1. Introduction	32
2.2. Introduction to Cultural Tourism	32-35

2.2.1.	Definitions of Cultural Tourism	35-40
2.2.2.	Attributes of Cultural Tourist Attractions and Destinations	40-46
2.2.3.	Cultural Tourist	46-50
2.2.4.	Approaches to the Study of Cultural Tourism as a Discipline	51-54
2.2.5.	Reasons for the Popularity of Cultural Tourism	54-56
2.2.6.	Subsets of Cultural Tourism	56-65
2.3.	Cultural Tourism and Regional Development	65-91
2.4.	Theoretical Background of Regional Development and Cultural Tourism	91-98
2.5.	Problems of Cultural Tourism and Regional Development	98-105
2.6.	Regional Development and its Objectives	105-108
2.7.	Regional Development Disparities in Sri Lanka	108-110
2.8.	Regional Development Approaches in Sri Lanka	110-129
CHAPTER THREE - The Study Area: Salient Features of the North Central Province		130-191
3.1.	Introduction	130-133
3.2.	Location and the Geographical Setting of the North Central Province	133-144
3.3.	Development Disparities in the North Central Province	145-165
3.4.	Socio Economic Back Ground and Intra Regional Disparities of the North Central Province	165
3.4.1.	Demographic Characteristics	166-172
3.4.2.	Settlements	173-174

3.4.3. Housing Conditions	175-176
3.4.4. Employment and Sources of Income	176-181
3.4.5. Employment	182-183
3.4.6. Education	183-184
3.4.7. Infrastructure Facilities	184-191

**CHAPTER FOUR - Cultural Tourism of the North Central Province:
Resources and the Potential**

Resources and the Potential	192-274
4.1. Introduction	192-193
4.2. Cultural Tourist Attractions of the North Central Province	193
4.2.1. Cultural Tourist Attractions Related to History and Archeology	193-220
4.2.2. Cultural Tourist Attractions Related to Lifestyles and Rituals	220-225
4.2.3. Cultural Tourist Attractions Related to Agriculture	225-230
4.2.4. Cultural Tourist Attractions Related to Irrigation	231
4.2.5. Cultural Tourist Attractions Related to Traditional Livelihoods	231-235
4.2.6. Cultural Tourist Attractions Related to Customs, Traditions and Folklore	235-238
4.3. Tourist Arrivals to the North Central Province	238-247
4.4. Constraints Related to Cultural Tourism of the North Central Province	247-248
4.4.1. The Problems Created to the Region	248-253
4.4.2. The Constraints Faced by Tourists in the Region	253-259
4.4.3. The problems faced by the village folk and the business community	259-260

4.4.4. Other Related Constraints in Cultural Tourism	260-261
4.5. Possible Devices Strategies to Mitigate the Identified Problems	262-270
4.6. Institutional Background Related to Cultural Tourism of the NCP	270-274
4.6.1. The Role of Travel Agencies in Promoting Cultural Tourism of the NCP	274-275
CHAPTER FIVE - The Contribution of Cultural Tourism for the Development of the North Central Province	276-342
5.1. Introduction	276
5.2. The Role of Cultural Tourism on Regional Development of the NCP	277
5.2.1. Generation of Employment Opportunities and Sources of Income	277-302
5.2.2. Agriculture and Livelihood Development	303-313
5.2.3. Empowerment of Women	313-320
5.2.4. Multiplier Effects of Cultural Tourism	320-327
5.2.5. Infrastructure Development	327-336
5.2.6. Development of Small and Medium Scale Industries	336-342
CHAPTER SIX – Conclusion and Recommendations	343-357
REFERENCES	358-379

LIST OF TABLES

List of Tables	Page Number
Table 1.1. Selected Sample for the In-depth Study	17-18
Table 1.2. Distribution of the Sample within Four Categories	19
Table 1.3. Target User Groups for Interview, Discussions and Case Studies	24
Table 2.1. Activity Based Cultural Tourists Typology	50
Table 2.2. Village-origin Staff in the Dai Village Company in China - 2010	82
Table 3.1. Mean and Annual and Monthly Rainfall Distribution of the NCP - 2005 - 2010	137
Table 3.2. Mean and Annual and Monthly Temperature Distribution of the NCP - 2006 – 2010	139
Table 3.3. Human Development Index and Dimensions of Sri Lanka by District - 2012	146
Table 3.4. Provincial Gross Domestic Production – 2010 – 2011.	147
Table 3.5. Composition of Sectoral Provincial Gross Domestic Production – 2010 -2011	149
Table 3.6. Mean and Median Household Income (in Rs.) by Province and District -2010-2011	150
Table 3.7. Income Poverty, Multidimensional Poverty Index and Multi Dimensionally Poverty Headcount - 2009-2010	154
Table 3.8. Labour Force Participation Rate by Gender and District – 2011	160

Table 3.9.	Percentage Distribution of Employed Population by Major Industry Groups by District – 2011	161
Table 3.10.	Ethnic Composition of the Selected Divisional Secretariat Divisions – 2012	169
Table 3.11.	Extent of Paddy Lands, Number of Farmers and Average Yield of Paddy by Divisional Secretariat Divisions– 2012	177
Table 3.12.	Information of Animal Husbandry of the DSD Level - 2012	181
Table 3.13.	Number of Schools and Students - 2012	184
Table 3.14.	Sources of Obtaining Drinking Water - 2012	188
Table 4.1.	Number of Tourist Who Visited the Anuradhapura Historic City	207
Table 4.2.	Number of Tourists Visited the Attractions of Mihintale	213
Table 4.3.	Number of Tourist Visited the Folk Museum and Revenue from Sales of Tickets 2008 – 2012	220
Table 4.4.	Number of Tourists According to Age	242
Table 4.5.	Goals and Ambitions of the Tourists	244
Table 4.6.	Sources of Information on Places of Interest	245
Table 4.7.	Modes of Garbage Disposal	251
Table 4.8.	Problems Faced by Tourists within the Cultural Attractions of the NCP	254
Table 5.1.	Composition of the Employment Related to Cultural Tourism by DSD Level	282
Table 5.2.	Nature of Employment Related to Cultural Tourism	284
Table 5.3.	Collection Modes of Selling Items of the Small Scale Business Community	293
Table 5.4.	Time Duration of Employees Engage in Cultural Tourism	296

Table 5.5.	Monthly Income Levels of the Small Scale Business Community	299
Table 5.6.	Monthly Personal Savings of the Business Community Engaged in Cultural Tourism	301
Table 5.7.	Miscellaneous Items Sold by the Regional Business Community	305
Table 5.8.	Women Engaged in Cultural Tourism Employments	316
Table 5.9.	Secondary Sources of Investment of the Business Community	323
Table 5.10.	Items Purchased by the Business Community from Cultural Tourism	326
Table 5.11.	Number of Guest Nights in Graded Accommodation in the NCP – 2001 -2012	333
Table 5.12.	Use of Internet Information by Foreign Tourists	335
Table 5.13.	Nature of Small and Medium Scale Industries Related to Cultural Tourism of the NCP	339

LIST OF FIGURES

List of Figures	Page Number	
Figure 1.1.	Location of the Study Area	15
Figure 1.2.	Distribution of the Sample among Research Sites	20
Figure 2.1.	Gunn's Model of a Cultural Tourist Attraction	43
Figure 2.2.	Canter's Model Applied to a Cultural Tourist Attraction	44
Figure 2.3.	Cultural Tourist Typology Based on Decision to Visit Destination	48
Figure 2. 4.	Links between Cultural Tourism and Regional Development	66
Figure 3.1.	The Relative Location of the North Central Province	134

Figure 3.2.	Districts Vulnerable to Drought	140
Figure 3.3.	The Drainage Basins of the NCP	144
Figure 3.4.	Mean and Median Monthly Per Capita Income by Sector, Province and Districts - 2010/11	152
Figure 3.5.	Multidimensional Poverty Headcount Index - 2012	156
Figure 3.6.	Poverty Headcount Index by Province – 2006/07 and 2009/10	157
Figure 3.7.	Provincial Road Density of Sri Lanka - 2011	158
Figure 3.8.	Provincial Contribution of Agriculture and Service Sectors to the Total Employment – 2011	162
Figure 3.9.	Provincial Unemployment Rate of Sri Lanka – 2011	164
Figure 3.10.	Population of the Selected Divisional Secretariat Divisions – 2012	167
Figure 3.11.	Population Distribution According to Religion– 2012	170
Figure 3.12.	Population Density of the Study Area – 2013	172
Figure 3.13.	Housing Conditions of the Selected Divisional Secretariat Divisions – 2012	175
Figure 3.14.	Extent of Land and Number of Farmers under Chena Cultivation – 2012	179
Figure 3.15.	DSD Level Employment Details of the NCP- 2012	182
Figure 3.16.	Health Facilities of the Selected DSDs – 2012	187
Figure 3.17.	Availability of Sanitary Facilities - 2012	189
Figure 4.1.	Panoramic View of Anuradhapura Historic City	196
Figure 4.2.	The Environs of the Historic City with the Tanks	197
Figure 4.3.	The Sri Maha Bodhiya, Festival and Ceremonies	199

Figure 4.4.	Ruwanwelisaya and Samadhi Buddha Statue	200
Figure 4.5.	Thuparamaya and Lovamahapaya	202
Figure 4.6.	Abhayagiri Dagaba and Jetavanaramaya	203
Figure 4.7.	Mirisavetiya Stupa	204
Figure 4.8.	Isurumuniya	205
Figure 4.9.	Kuttam Pokuna (The Twin Pond)	206
Figure 4.10.	The Environs of Mihintale	209
Figure 4.11.	Ancient Ponds in the Vicinity of Mihintale	212
Figure 4.12.	Places of Attractions at Tantirimale	215
Figure 4.13.	Number of Tourist Visited Tantirimale	216
Figure 4.14.	Anuradhapura and Abhayagiri Archaeological Museums	218
Figure 4.15.	Anuradhapura Folk Museum	219
Figure 4.16.	Picturesque View of a Traditional Tank Village in the NCP	222
Figure 4.17.	Components of a Traditional Tank Village in the NCP	223
Figure 4.18.	Foreign Tourists at the Villages of NCP	225
Figure 4.19.	Foreign Tourists Visit Chena Cultivation at Tantirimale	227
Figure 4.20.	Kiri Ithuruma	228
Figure 4.21.	Maiden Rice Ceremony at Anuradhapura	230
Figure 4.22.	Pottery Making in the NCP	233
Figure 4.23.	Using Buffalos in Threshing	234
Figure 4.24.	Inland Fishing Practices in the NCP	235
Figure 4.25.	Performance of a Gammadu Festival	237

Figure 4.26.	Arrivals of Tourists to the NCP - 2000 – 2011	239
Figure 4.27.	Number of Foreign Tourists to the NCP by Countries	240
Figure 4.28.	Gender Composition of Tourist - 2011 – 2013.	241
Figure 4.29.	Percentage Distribution of Modes of Transport Used by Tourists	243
Figure 4.30.	Number of Guest Nights in Graded Accommodation Establishments of the NCP - 2000 – 2011	246
Figure 4.31.	Tourists' Satisfactory Level about the Visits to NCP	249
Figure 4.32.	Unsystematic Garbage Disposal at the Sacred City of Mihintale	250
Figure 4.33.	Using Archeological Monuments as Supportive Structures and Erection of Tents Covering Them	252
Figure 4.34.	Uncouth Behaviors of Domestic Tourists	252
Figure 4.35.	Unauthorized Constructions in the Tourist Sites of the NCP	253
Figure 4.36.	Number of Tourists and the Accommodation Capacity 2001 – 2011	255
Figure 4.37.	Inadequacy of Accommodation Facilities for Domestic Tourists	256
Figure 4.38.	Quotidian Number of Tourist Visit to the NCP	260
Figure 4.39.	Community Service by the Commercial Enterprises	263
Figure 4.40.	Alternative Ways Introduced for Proper Disposal of Garbage	264
Figure 4.41.	Tour Guide Training Programmes by SLITHM	270
Figure 5.1.	Nature of Employments Related to Cultural Tourism - 2011	280
Figure 5.2.	Pavement Hawkers in Mihintale	282
Figure 5.3.	Palm Readers and Snake-charmers in the Historic City of Anuradhapura	285
Figure 5.4.	Number of Employees in Hotel and Accommodation Sector	286

Figure 5.5.	Modes of Marketing of Small Scale Trading Community	291
Figure 5.6.	Business Community in the Sacred City of Mihintale	292
Figure 5.7.	Regional Brokers to the NCP by Direction of Approach	294
Figure 5.8.	Number of Migrants and Their Places of Birth	298
Figure 5.9.	Wayside Business Community Engaged in Cultural Tourism	306
Figure 5.10.	Fishermen Engaged in Fish Selling	311
Figure 5.11.	Number of Foreign Tourists Visited the Traditional Villages of the NCP	312
Figure 5.12.	Women Engaged in Business Activities	317
Figure 5.13.	Various Multipliers of Cultural Tourism of the NCP	322
Figure 5.14.	Secondary Sources of Income of the Business Community of Cultural Tourism	324
Figure 5.15.	Indirect Employments of Cultural Tourism	325
Figure 5.16.	Infrastructure Development of Tourist Attractions	330
Figure 5.17.	Amelioration of Public Sanitation Facilities of the NCP	330
Figure 5.18.	Contribution of Cultural Tourism on Social Infrastructure Development	331
Figure 5.19.	Number of Rooms in Graded Tourist Hotels of the NCP - 2000 – 2012	332
Figure 5.20.	Foreign Tourists Participating in Traditional Food Processing Systems	338
Figure 5.21.	Cottage Industries Related to Cultural Tourism	340
Figure 5.22.	The Advantages of Prevalence in Small and Medium Scale Industries	341

Abbreviations

ACRR	-	Ancient Cities Resort Region
AII	-	Aggregated Infrastructure Index
AMDP	-	Accelerated Mahaweli Development Project
BOI	-	Board of Investment
CBT	-	Community Based Tourism
CCF	-	Central Cultural Fund
CDF	-	Community Development Fund
CMB	-	Community Management Board
CMR	-	Colombo Metropolitan Region
CTRR	-	Colombo City Resort Region
DCB	-	Decentralized Capital Budget
DCC	-	District Coordination Committees
DDC	-	Divisional Development Council
DENR	-	Department of Environmental and Natural Resources
DPA	-	District Political Authority
DSD	-	Divisional Secretaries Division
EATLE	-	European Association for Tourism and Leisure Education
ECRR	-	East Coast Resort Region
ECTARC	-	European Centre for Traditional and Regional Cultures
GA	-	Government Agent
GDP	-	Gross Domestic Production
GIS	-	Geographical Information System
GND	-	Grama Niladhari Division
GPS	-	Global Positioning System
HCRR	-	Hill Country Resort Region
HCS	-	Highland Colonization Schemes
HDI	-	Human Development Index
HDI	-	Human Development Index
HIES	-	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
HPI	-	Human Poverty Index
IPZs	-	Investment Promotion Zones
IRDP	-	Integrated Rural Development Project
ITDC	-	India Tourism Development Corporation

IUCN	- International Union for Conservation of Nature
MPH	- Multidimensional Poverty Headcount
MPI	- Mean / Median Monthly Per Capita Income
MPI	- Multidimensional Poverty Index
NCP	- North Central Province
NUD-IST	- Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theorizing)
OECD	- Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PAWB	- Protected Area and Wildlife Bureau
PGDP	- Provincial Gross Domestic Production
REAP	- Regional Economic Advancement Programme
SATIDP	- South Asia Tourism Infrastructure Development Project
SLCB	- Sri Lanka Convention Bureau
SLITHM	- Sri Lanka Institute of Tourism and Hospitality Management
SLTB	- Sri Lanka Tourist Board
SLTDA	- Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority
SLTPB	- Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau
UNDP	- United Nation Development Programme
UNESCO	- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VES	- Village Extension Scheme
WSCRR	- West and South Coast Resort Region
WTO	- World Tourism Organization

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is generally considered to be a positive agent in the economic and regional development process of developing countries. It is an economic activity that provides numerous opportunities for people in the peripheral regions in these countries to earn a living. It enables them to acquire wealth and stimulate their socio cultural and economic development. As the tourism sector accelerates the development of the other sectors too, it has the potential to solve the problems arising from inter and intra-regional disparities. Hence, the link between tourism and regional development has been recognized as a novel approach in the field of regional development studies. During the last few decades, many new forms of tourism have emerged in mass tourism and these have now been introduced as regional development strategies. Cultural tourism which is one of the above new forms is the fastest growing segment of the industry which can be used to accrue more benefits to peripheral regions where cultural and historical resources are abundant.

The main objective of this study was to analyze the present role and the potential contribution of cultural tourism to the development of the NCP. The secondary objectives of the study were to identify challenges to the development of the NCP; examine the extent to which cultural tourism has contributed to the regional development process of the region, identify the existing cultural tourist sites that attract tourists; discover untapped resources such as cultural activities; beliefs and customs in traditional villages that have the potential to promote cultural tourism; review the existing cultural tourism policies and strategies of

developing countries; using the experience gained in other developing countries, explore the benefits that have already accrued to the host communities in the region from cultural tourism; identify the current negative impacts of cultural tourism, and problems that would arise in future and recommend appropriate measures to weaken negative impacts and strengthen positive ones.

The methodology of this research comprised a number of steps; a) a preliminary survey to select the study area, b) a pilot survey to test questionnaires, c) data collection and d) data analysis. After a preliminary survey, Anuradhapura historic city, Mihintale and Tantirimale sacred cities and twenty nine traditional villages in the vicinity of the sacred sites were selected for the in-depth study using the judgment sampling technique. A thirty percent sample of host communities was selected from each village using the stratified random sample technique. The total sample selected for the survey was 480, which comprised 290 villagers; 100 tourists; 30 hotel managers and 60 key informants. Given an exploratory nature to the research, various research techniques like, field and questionnaire surveys, interviews, observations and group discussions have been employed. Both quantitative and qualitative analytical methods were used in combination for analysis the collected data.

The overall findings of this research are that cultural tourism of the NCP has contributed to the development of the region playing a major role in generating employment opportunities and sources of income; development of agriculture and livelihood; empowerment of women; multiplier effects; infrastructure development and development of small and medium scale industries. The findings of this investigation can assist rural developers in the implementation of community development strategies based on women's empowerment.

Key words: *Cultural Tourism, Regional Development, North Central Province*