A Study on the Use of Computer Software for Archeological Impact Assessments

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Sri Lanka is blessed with numerous sites of archaeological importance in South Asia. After 1977 county is undergoing rapid urbanization and implementing several projects for the economic development. Therefore during the last three decades we had lost some of our archaeological sites. One of the main issues with regard to archeological heritage is how to achieve compromise in sustaining this aspect of heritage in the face of rapid urbanization and development. As a solution for this issue, a new subject known as Rescue Archeology was introduced to the discipline of archeology. The objective of rescue archeology is to recover and manage the threatened archeological heritage for present and future generations. Archeological Impact Assessments (AIA) are currently being conducted in Sri Lanka.

In archeological impact assessments, one of the main purposes is to record through images and measured drawings, the monuments and site that are being affected due to such development. The reports that are produced for archaeological impact assessments at present are simple reports with basic facts of the monuments. These records will therefore become the only source which can be used to obtain information about the threatened monuments.

At present, developed countries use computer software to execute productive archeological impact assessment reports. The main objective of this study is to investigate the possibility of using such software in presenting data when compiling archeological impact assessment reports.

A new program is currently being developed to apply on two of the main impact assessment projects Yan-Oya and Malwathu-Oya valleys, using software such as Excel, Access, 3D Max, Auto CAD, Google Sketch up, Arc Map, Arc Science.

Such a program allows the researchers to obtain information regarding the affected archeological sites. Thus, it provides the opportunity to study the accurate location (latitudes/ longitudes), height and width, scale and unique archaeological features of the monument. As such it offers the spatial and three dimensional information of the monument and sites that the conventional recordings methods cannot offer. But on the other hand such a program will provide the opportunity to get an idea of the sites and monuments through virtual reality stimulations.

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