

04. Potentials of Tourism Industry in Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

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 a supply of complex mixture of material and psychological elements, which are accommodation, transportation, attractions and entertainments, fantasy or rest, recreation, educational and other social interests. The area in and around Anuradhapura is designated as one of the prime places of tourism in Sri Lanka. It has many places, which attract many types of tourists. The pilgrimage complex is composed of places such as the Sri Mahabodhiya, the Ruwanweliseya, the Thuparama, the Jethawana, the Mirisawati, the Abayagiri and the Lankarama and Mihinthale. In addition, ruins of the ancient civilization are visible at every corner. Therefore, this attempts to study the opportunities for tourism in and around the Anuradhapura city. The objective of this paper is to assess the opportunities of tourism, government policies and plans of tourism. The study is expected to use both primary and secondary data. The sample consists of 10 tourist guides and randomly selected 20 tourists. There are very low tourists' arrivals to Anuradhapura though total tourists' arrivals have increased in Sri Lanka last year. There was only an increase of 2% - 4% tourists' arrivals in Anuradhapura in 2010. 45% of tourists visit Anuradhapura because of its ancient situation and 25% of tourists visit to see the archeological environment of this old city. Dryness and the religious importance are not given as a special reason to visit Anuradhapura. 55% of the respondents indicated that hotel and restaurant facilities are at a sufficient level. Though, there are enough guides, their charges are unreasonable and language skills are weak and difficult to trust information given by them. 55% of tourists did

not agree with charging of prices of the tourist's tickets. Government has a general tourism policy, but it has not been taken into account of the special character of the tourism in and around Anuradhapura. The government is expected to develop the tourism in Anuradhapura, for the purpose of minimizing negative externalities to Anuradhapura socio-economic environment and maximizing its positive externalities for a sustainable development of the tourism and the area in near future.

Key words: Tourism in Anuradhapura, Heritage tourism

Introduction

The great ruins and remains of ancient civilization provide Sri Lanka with a good background for promoting cultural tourism. Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Dambadeniya, Sigiriya are some of the places in Sri Lanka, where tourism is developed. Before 1977, Sri Lanka had no formal tourism sector, due to low level of global tourism and local limitations of undeveloped infrastructure. Therefore, tourism occupied an insignificant place in the economy and the effects to boost the industry were not very successful. At present, Sri Lanka is one of the most preferred countries among the developing countries, and also globally. The pleasure of touring to Sri Lanka is heightened because, one does not have to travel great distances to experience the Island's many attractions.

Importance of the Study

In the Sri Lankan economy, there are three sectors as agriculture, industrial and services. Presently higher contribution of the GDP is service sector, secondly industrial sector and thirdly agriculture sector. Gross Domestic Product under constant price in 2009 is 59.3%, 28.6%, 12.0% values in service, industry and agriculture sector respectively (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2009)

During the past few decades, many economies have experienced growth in their service sectors, even when the more traditional agricultural and

manufacturing sectors have been subject to decline or stagnation. Tourism is a service based industry and as such has been partly responsible for this service sector growth. Contribution of tourism industry is very necessary to the progress of service sector.

Problem Statement

Most of foreign visitors and domestic visitors visit Anuradhapura due to its religious and cultural values. There are many attractive places in Anuradhapura and it brings opportunity to Anuradhapura District. Therefore, it is necessary to study the most prominent availability of opportunities for tourism and also necessary to find out what are the weaknesses of tourism industry in Anuradhapura. Then, it will help to improve the opportunities and also decrease the weaknesses of tourism industry and make a good situation for tourism. It will lead to progress of tourism not only in Anuradhapura, but also overall tourism in Sri Lanka.

Objectives of the Study

- To study the availability of opportunities for tourism industry in Anuradhapura.
- To study the contribution of total revenue in tourism industry from Anuradhapura District.
- To study the availability of opportunities for tourism industry in Anuradhapura and study its merits or demerits.

Methodology

Study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected by using continuing interviews, group discussions and questionnaire. Continuing interviews and group discussions were held with hotel managers, tourist guides and relevant officers. Using 10 tourist guides to collect data by using one page of structured open and closed ended

questionnaire. Further, 30 tourists were randomly selected and collected data by using one page of structured open and closed ended questionnaire.

Primary data were collected mainly to find out the most prominent opportunities available for tourism in Anuradhapura and study its merits or demerits. Secondary data were collected from Annual Statistical Report in Sri Lanka, Report of Tourist Development Authority and Annual Report of Central Bank of Sri Lanka, relevant websites and also from museum and Jethawana Project in Anuradhapura. Secondary data were collected to identify the government policies and plans to enhance tourism industry and find out the contribution of total revenue in tourism industry from Anuradhapura District.

All the data were listed in using Likert scale method. Relevant data were analyzed and presented by using descriptive, geometrics and statistical methods. Descriptive analysis was conducted by using paragraph writing, geometrics analysis by using charts, tables, graphs, maps etc. and statistical method was used by utilizing SPSS package.

Many factors affect the development of tourism industry at Anuradhapura. Using Liner Regression Analysis researchers can build the linear model. Under this model mainly "T" test, "F" test were used to analysis the data using ANOVA table and Coefficient table and finally it could be found out "Is this model statistically significant or insignificant?"

Significance of tourism industry in Sri Lanka

The public sector policy framework for tourism was established in the Tourist Board Act No. 10 of 1966, the Ceylon Hotel Corporation Act No 14 of 1966 and the Tourist Development Act No. 14 of 1968. In 1966, Sri Lanka registered 302,265 visitor arrivals. Arrivals increased steadily and exceeded 400,000 (Arunatilake, Jayasuriya and Kelegama, 2001).

After the implementing of liberation policy in 1977, private investors started to invest more and more in tourism sector and it expanded and more travel

agencies and tour operations were established. Therefore, Sri Lanka has been enjoying a growing number of visitors and sustained growth in tourism industry, however tourism activities declined dramatic in the mid – 1980 s due to ethnic unrest. However, by 1983 the tourism had become another casualty of civil war. A new growth momentum started in 2002 as a result of the peace process and renewed promotional activities led by the Sri Lanka Tourist Board.

Tourism industry importance to Sri Lanka's economy is indicated by the fact that it is now the fourth largest foreign exchange earner, overtaking traditional foreign exchange earners such as rubber, coconuts and gems. However, tourism's contribution to the total foreign exchange earnings is, at 4.6 percent, still relatively small. By the end of 2004, the total number of persons employed directly in the tourism sector was 53,776 (this increases to more than 125,000 when indirect employment is included), 63.9 percent of whom were employed accommodation and catering sectors (Sri Lanka Tourist Development Authority, 2004).

After December 26 of 2004, the tourism Industry in Sri Lanka collapsed completely due to the brunt of Tsunami disaster. This highly damaged coastal areas like Galle, Hikkaduwa, Thangalla and Unavatuna etc. More than 20 hotels and 5600 hotel rooms in the coastal areas were completely destroyed. More than 200 tourists were killed. So, Tsunami was the deathblow of Sri Lankan Tourism Industry. Nevertheless, after the war in Sri Lanka on 18th May 2009 it led to progress of tourism industry. Today Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority and Sri Lankan government have a challenge to revive the tourism Industry; they need to adapt new policies and plans to upgrade the industry again minimizing its negative externalities.

Table 01: Situation of the tourism industry Activities in Sri Lanka from 2005 to 2009

Years Activities	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
1. Tourist arrivals (quantity)	549,308	559,603	494,008	438,475	447,890
❖ to pleasure	382,321	392,766	331,238	321,079	358,188
❖ business	92,879	96,981	52,116	37,261	38,473
❖ other	14,108	69,856	110,654	80,135	51,229
2. Tourist night (thousands)	4,754	5,793	4,940	4,166	4,076
3. Rooms Usage rate (%)	45.4	47.8	46.2	43.9	48.4
4. Net foreign receipts(Rs. billion)	43,151	42,586	42,571	37,094	40,133
5. per capita foreign receipts (Rs. billion)	66,223	76,100	86,175	84,598	83,740
6. Total employment level (quantity)	125,004\	133,558	145,239	124,456	125,153
❖ Direct	52,085	55,649	60,516	51,857	52,147
❖ Indirect	72,919	77,909	84,723	72,599	73,006

Source: Central Bank of Sri Lanka, Annual report, 2009

Tourists coming in to the island can be categorized according to sex. Male tourist arrivals are always greater than female tourist arrivals. Generally, tourists in the world have been traveling for various kinds of purposes such as purpose of pleasure, business affairs, education, sports and recreation, conference, visiting friends and relations – etc. Most of the people travel for the purpose of pleasure. It is also the same position in case of Sri Lanka.

Opportunities for tourism industry in Anuradhapura

There are many archeological and historical places available to see in Anuradhapura such as Sri Maha Bodhi Tree, Thuparama Dagoba, Ruvanveli

Dagoba, Abhayagiri Stupa and Monastery, Jethavana Dagoba and Monastery, Samadhi Buddha, Isurumuniya Lovers, Mihinthale, Awkana Buddha, Kuttam Pokuna, Museum, Ritigala etc. Distance from other cities, restaurants and hotels facilities, transport facilities; traditional foods and attractive places are the main factors to create opportunities for tourism industry in Anuradhapura.

Places to stay and rest

There are some top rated restaurants and hotels in Anuradhapura. Tourists visit those places and they have good opinion about hotels and restaurants where they stay and rest. Salgado Hotel and Bakery, Anzu's Restaurant and Cadjan Restaurant are famous restaurants among tourists and also Ulgalla Resort, Palm Garden Village Hotel, Heritage Hotel and Little Paradise, Randiya, Miridiya are famous hotels in Anuradhapura. In addition, there are so many tourist hotels in Anuradhapura targeting foreign tourists.

Distances from other cities to Anuradhapura

Anuradhapura is 57 km, 66 km and 80 km away from Habarana, Dambulla and Sigiriya respectively. Anuradhapura is 206 km away from Colombo; therefore if tourists only visit Colombo, most of them are lazy to visit Anuradhapura due to distance. But, it is easy to go to Anuradhapura by train from Colombo. It is also a good opportunity for tourist industry in Anuradhapura.

Difficulties for tourism industry in Anuradhapura

Tourists mostly trust travel agencies and it gives information to tourists. Here, they provide information indicating there is more fun at Polonnaruwa than at Anuradhapura, which affects the status of Anuradhapura. According to annual statistics most of the tourists that visit Anuradhapura do not try to stay more than one day due to lack of facilities, insufficient places for leisure activities, rest etc.

According to "Aiberto Bustani" in Mexico it is a big weakness not to have information in English near the sacred places and normally information is available only in Sinhala and Tamil. The big barrier for tourist industry in Anuradhapura is also not enough sanitary facilities near Ruwanweliseya, Isurumuniya, Abayagiri etc, though are very necessary facilities. Hence, tourists face big problems and it will create bad impression about Anuradhapura. Therefore, government intervenes and makes new policies which, will lead to decrease the negative image.

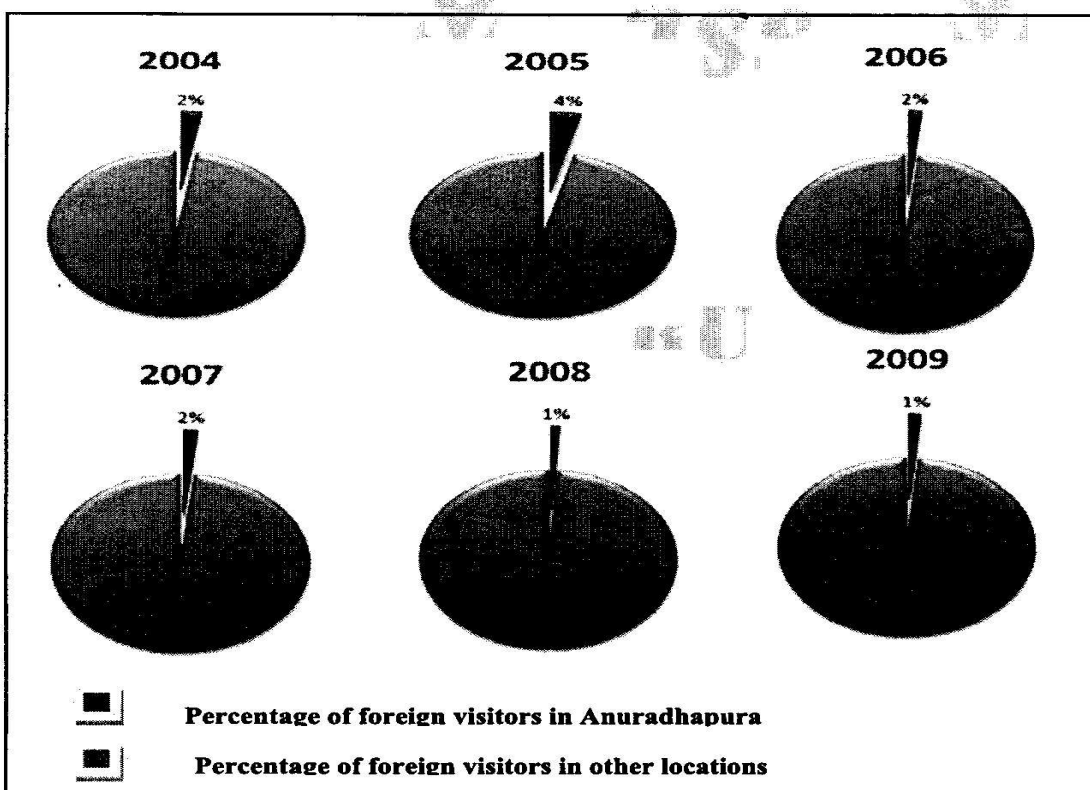
Tourism policy in Anuradhapura

Sri Lanka tourism is aiming for high growth. Sri Lanka seeks to become a gateway to south Asia. To achieve this, the industry believes it must improve air access, undertake more up – market promotion and enhance regional cooperation. And also to achieve this target it should enhance tourism all over the country including tourism in Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Kandy, Galle, Colombo etc. There should be a tourism policy individually for all cities in the country. However, there is no good tourism policy for Anuradhapura District and no government intervention for this. There are mature infrastructure facilities in Anuradhapura and not many highways connecting the airport in Colombo to Anuradhapura. Government should make policy for infrastructure development and make high ways to enhance tourism industry in this ancient city.

Anuradhapura takes revenue from tourism through charges from transport, hotels, guides, tickets at various places, donations, trade etc (discussion with Tourist Board, 2011). Currently, there are two projects for rehabilitation of Abayagiri and Jethavana under the Central Cultural Fund, in which 1500 laborers work. Salaries for those laborers are paid from tourist revenue. After war, only Jethawana museum earns, revenue at least Rs.300,000.00 per day (discussion with Officer In-charge of Museum). Comparatively, compared with other cities, Anuradhapura collects revenue of 10 percent from tourists' tickets. Anuradhapura Guides, who supply information and guidance to tourists charge 400 rupee per one hour and 15 dollars chargers from a

tourist for a tour by guides. However, some tourists pay more than 50 Dollars and some other days they pay less than 15 Dollars. There is a special facility for tourists that come from Buddhist countries and children. It is a good policy in Anuradhapura tourism. Tourists coming from Asian countries can take half tickets. But, before that, tourists should discuss with the head office in Colombo and inform Anuradhapura through head office. After that, they will give these special facilities. Not only that but also, monks coming from Thailand, China, Japan etc have free tickets because as a Buddhist city we must honour them. About charges for tourist children, if they are older than 12 years, they should take half ticket and if the children are less than 12 years old no charges are made. These are some tourism policies in Anuradhapura, but there is no government intervention for tourism industry. Also, there is not enough tourism policy and if there are good policies it will lead to increase tourism arrivals in Anuradhapura.

Graph 01: Contribution of foreign visits to Anuradhapura.



Source: Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority, Annual Statistical Report, 2004-2009

Graph 1 shows that contribution to total foreign visitors to Anuradhapura for 2004-2009. In addition, it shows that there was less number of foreign visitors for Anuradhapura than other cities. It indicates that Anuradhapura has a low percentage of arrivals in comparison to total tourist arrivals in Sri Lanka. Now, it is over and tourist arrivals should increase continuously, but there are some other reasons as long distance between religious places, fewer facilities than other cities, fewer places to get fun etc. That is a bad situation in Anuradhapura for development of tourism.

Table 02: Foreign visitors and revenue from tourism in Sri Lanka

Year s	Total	Location					
		Number of foreign visitors			Revenue Rs/=		
	Number of foreign visitors	Anuradhap ura	Peradeniya	Dehiwala	Anuradhap ura	Peradeniya	Dehiwala
2004	246380	6175	229429	11625	9306000	6801030 0	48554 00
2005	110443	4142	104272	10156	7787000	3076880 0	38938 75
2006	138232	2451	143509	10479	4835000	4250070 0	39277 50
2007	125452	2371	101272	237530	4625000	4847560 0	75662 50
2008	112190	1282	113179	15866	2747000	6651570 0	93316 25
2009	109404	1655	117427	11533	4242062	6883830 0	13452 000

Source: Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority, Annual Statistical Report, 2004-2009

Table 2 clearly shows mainly three locations as Anuradhapura, Peradeniya and Dehiwala. Under these three locations tourist arrivals to Peradeniya is larger than Dehiwala and Anuradhapura. Therefore, contribution of tourist industry from revenue in Peradeniya is larger than other two locations. It means Peradeniya takes a large proportion of total revenue of tourism industry. When speaking about Anuradhapura tourism, tourist arrivals for Anuradhapura is lower than other two locations. It means contribution to Sri Lanka tourist industry revenue from Anuradhapura is a very small proportion. In 2009, number of foreign visitors are 1655, 117427, 11533 in Anuradhapura, Peradeniya and Dehiwala respectively. Therefore, we can clearly indicate that contribution of total revenue in tourism industry from Anuradhapura district is very low and it is a problematic situation.

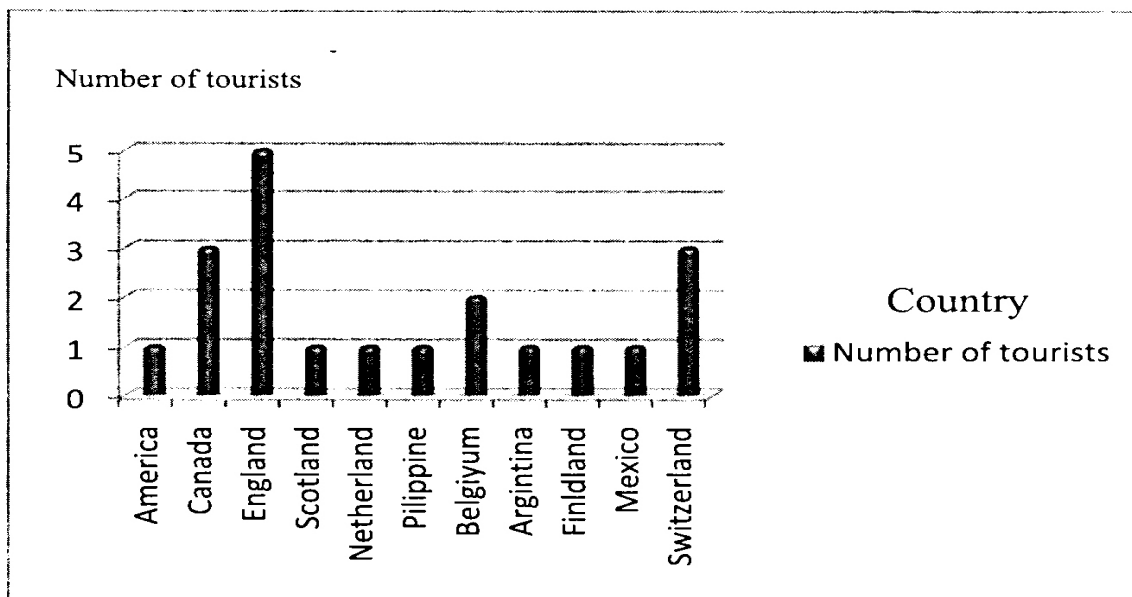
Table 03: Countries where tourist has come to visit ancient cities in Sri Lanka

Country	Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa & Sigiriya (%)
North America	
Canada	25.11
USA	18.16
Europe	
France	65.17
Netherlands	68.18
Italy	69.31
UK	47.57
Germany	44.91
Others	41.18
Asia	
India	9.27
Japan	48.21
Others	09.87
Australasia	
Australia	38.88
New Zealand	0
Average	40.58

Source: Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority, Annual Statistical Report, 2004-2009

Table 3 shows the percentage of tourist arrivals from different countries to visit ancient cities of Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa and Sigiriya in year 2006. There are high tourist arrivals to these ancient cities from European countries. Italy, Netherlands and France arrivals are 69.31%, 68.18% and 65.17% respectively. Asian tourist arrivals are recorded in second place. Under this, Japan records a higher number than India and China. According to table 3 it is clear that more European tourists visit Anuradhapura ancient city than Asian countries and North American countries. It indicates that, all Asian countries especially, Thailand, India, Indonesia etc have archeological and religious places than Anuradhapura, in Sri Lanka. Therefore, they have a low interest to visit Anuradhapura.

Graph 02: Distributions of countries from where tourist arrival to Anuradhapura

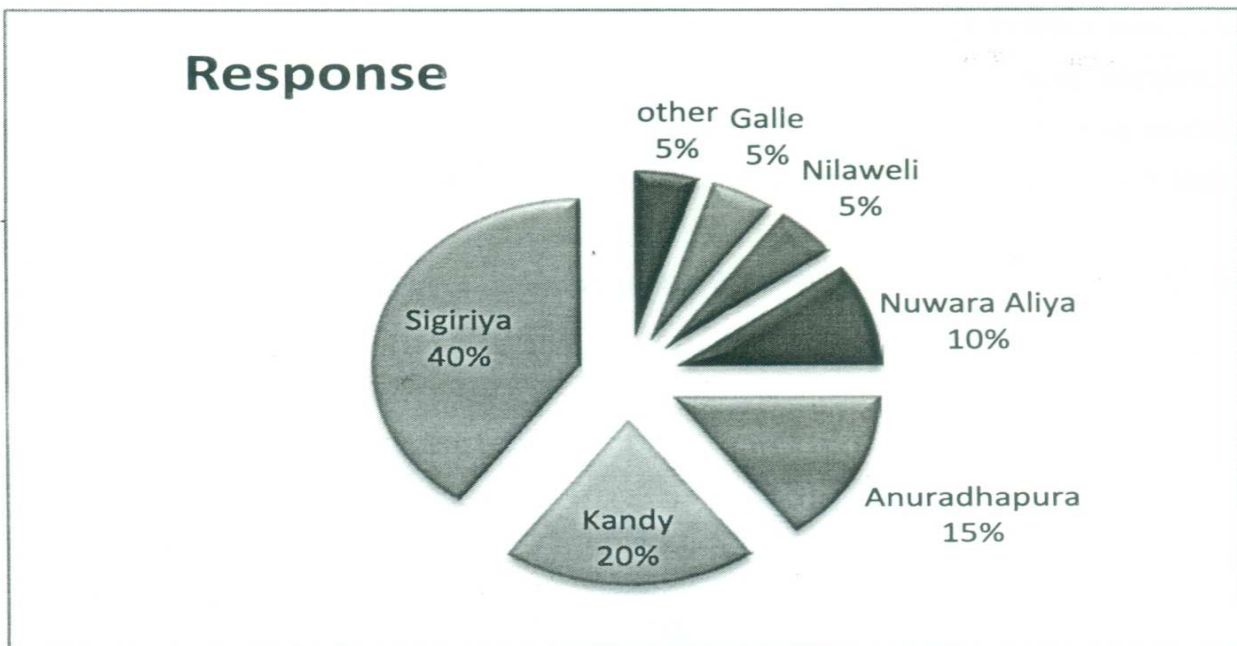


Source: Field survey, 2011

Graph 2 shows the tourist arrivals from different countries to Anuradhapura in 2011 on off-season period. According to this chart, England is the country from where most tourists have arrived at Anuradhapura. 25% of tourist came from England. Tourist arrivals from Canada and Switzerland were second place and that is 15% individually. Through the graph 2 we can understand

England, Canada and Switzerland are the countries from where tourists mostly come to Anuradhapura due to lack of ancient archeological religion places in those countries. According to tourists guides, they also agree to this situation because, most of guides said that England and Switzerland are the countries from where tourists mostly visit this ancient city.

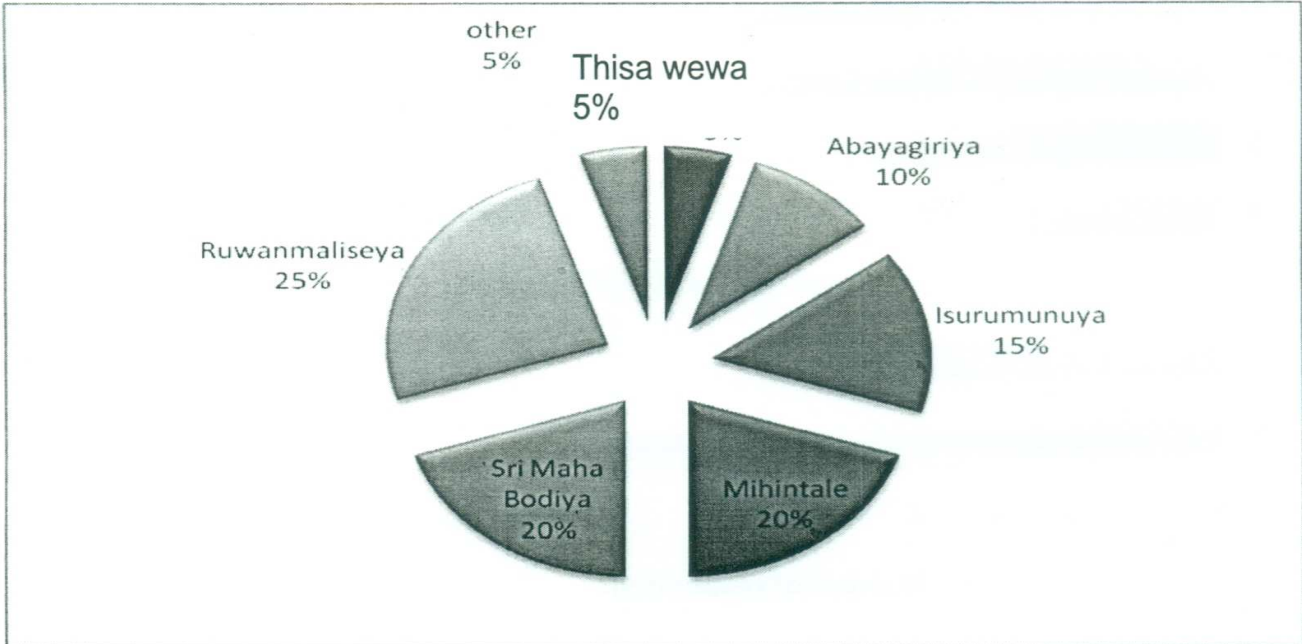
Graph 03: Distributions of places tourists like to visit in Sri Lanka



Source: Field survey, 2011

According to research, most of them prefer to visit in Sigiriya and it represents 40%. Secondly, they like to visit Kandy and it represents 20%. Anuradhapura is in the third place. It is not a bad situation. Anuradhapura also has archeological and religious places as same as Sigiriya and Kandy but, there are some weaknesses at Anuradhapura for it to be in the third place. According to tourist opinion, some of them have said that it needs a tourist information location and others said that they do not enough road signs in English for travelers to travel within the large area. 15% of the tourists agree about this poor situation of Anuradhapura tourist industry.

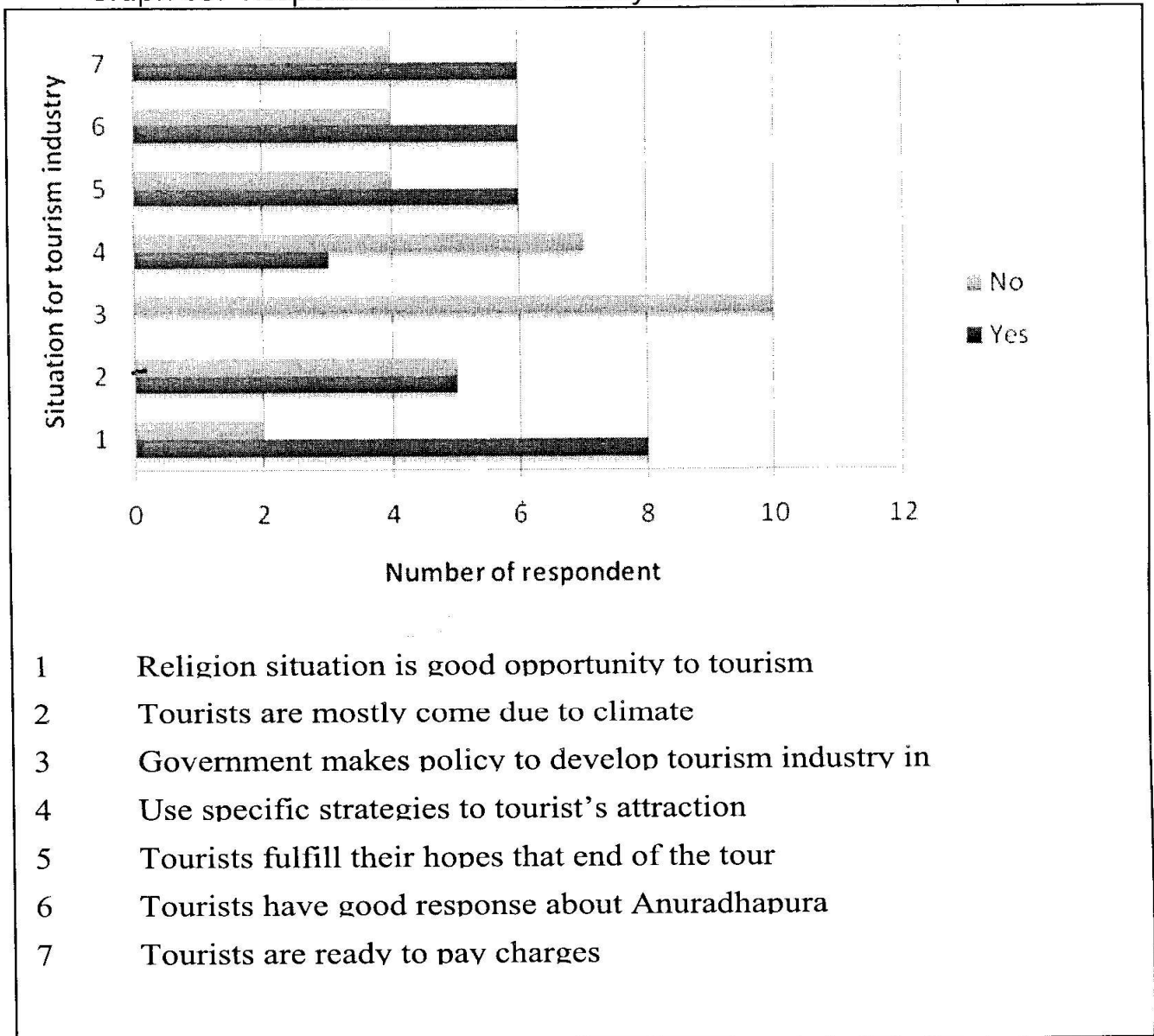
Graph 04: Distributions of places that tourists like to visit in Anuradhapura



Source: Field survey, 2011

45 percent tourist said that due to the ancient city they love to visit Anuradhapura. That is a good opportunity for Anuradhapura tourism and 25 percent said that due to archeological remains they like to visit Anuradhapura. That means tourist mostly visit Anuradhapura due to archeological and ancient situation but not for its religious value. This is a good situation in Anuradhapura tourism and should protect this ancient city. 15% of tourists have other purposes to visit Anuradhapura. They like to visit Anuradhapura to see the white pagoda because, as they indicated Anuradhapura has more white pagodas than any other place in Sri Lanka, 15% visit Isurumuniya. Tourists like to visit Abayagiri and Thisa wewa. It is 10%, 5% respectively. That means Ruwanmeliseya, Sri Maha Bodhi and Mihintale are valued by tourists in Anuradhapura and it is a supporting factor of Anuradhapura tourism.

Graph 05: Responses of tourist industry situation in Anuradhapura



Accordingly, religious value is a good opportunity to tourism industry in Anuradhapura. 80% of the guides agree about this situation and accordingly it is clear that tourist do not come to Anuradhapura due to climate because 60% agree about this. The level of government intervention in the tourism in Anuradhapura is very limited. All respondents said that though there is lack of proper policy of government, it enhances to develop tourism in

Anuradhapura. 70% respondents said that there are no specific strategies to develop tourist attractions. Government should intervene and encourage tourism in Anuradhapura, otherwise in the future it will lead to a breakdown of the tourism. More than half of tourists who visit Anuradhapura (60%) had fulfilled their hopes and were ready to pay charges.

Table 04 Facilities for tourism in Anuradhapura

Facilities	Yes %	No %
Good travelling facilities	55	45
Sufficient hotels	55	45
Enough facilities to rest	70	30
Charge reasonable price for tickets	45	55
Sufficient guides	60	40
Chagers of guides' unreasonable	20	80
Good language skills of guides	35	65
Can trust information of guides	35	65

Source: Field survey, 2011

Table 4 shows facilities for tourism in Anuradhapura and responses. According to their opinion, 55% of tourist agrees that there are good traveling facilities and sufficient hotels in Anuradhapura. 45% of tourist did not agree about this idea. Due to high responses, there is some good situation about these two facilities. 70% of them agree that there are enough facilities to rest. It is a good opportunity to develop Anuradhapura tourism. 45% of them agree about reasonable charges for ticket but, 55% of them disagree about this situation. According to tourists' responses, 60% of them said that there are sufficient guides and 80% of tourists agree on unreasonable chargers of guides, only 20% said that guide's chargers are reasonable. 35% are satisfied on language skills of guides and validity about their information. This is a problematic situation because, 65% them said that the language skill of guides and their information cannot be trusted. There are sufficient tourist guides, but their guidance is poor, which is a problem faced by tourism at Anuradhapura.