

# Promoting Cycling as a New Trend of Transportation among Tourists; the Case Study in the Polonnaruwa Sacred City

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## Introduction & Research

### Background

Sri Lanka has always been an attractive tourist destination, which attract more tourists from deferent regions. In addition, from the past, Sri Lanka attracted many merchants and explorers due to its strategic location. Its uniqueness and size earned it the name 'Taprobane' and 'The Pearl of the Indian Ocean'. Today, Sri Lanka offers leisure and business travellers a spectrum of attractions **Invalid source specified..** In Sri Lanka tourism is biggest foreign exchange earning sector, which contributes to economy through several ways, such as creating the jobs, reducing the current account deficit of the balance of payments, positive externalities etc **Invalid source specified..** It is reported that Sri Lanka earned USD 3518.5 million from 2 million of foreign tourists in 2016 **Invalid source specified..** The direct economic impact of the industry comes from accommodation, transportation, entertainment and attractions.

Transportation is a major factor of attracting tourist. Lack of public transportation, road accident, traffic jams & high cost of hiring are the major transport problems faced by tourist. However, Sri Lanka has a well-connected network of transportation, which covers road, rail and air. Both national transportation services and privet transportation services operate within the island. There are several facilitated companies for providing transportation facilities such as, Taxi operators, expo rail, air taxi, Colombo city tour, Rajadhani express and clean city cycle club. They provide better facilities to travel from accommodations to tourist sites along with the travel agencies. The transportation should be always environment friendly & should not be harmful to tourism sites. Because, most of tourist attract to the historical & archeological places in Sri Lanka due to its cultural and historical value. Therefore, it is very important to give priority for a safety-transportation mode for both tourism sites & tourists.

Among the number of transportation modes, cycling become a famous transportation mode of tourist; especially, travelling inside the site. The regular starting point for cycling in Sri Lanka is Habarana. Cycling is popular in Kandalama, Dambulla, Sigiriya, Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa & Kandy ect. Then, it is more important to find out the tourist's attitude towards this new trend of transportation mode in Sri Lankan tourism industry.

Therefore, this study is generally attempt to identify the attitudes & perceptions on the cycling inside the tourism site of Polonnaruwa sacred city & promote cycling as a new trend of transportation among foreign & domestic tourists.

### Methodology

The study area is Polonnaruwa sacred city, located in Polonnaruwa, North Central Province, Sri Lanka. Data were collected through structured questioner by interviewing 100 of foreign tourist, who travel in the sacred city of Polonnaruwa. Field observations & Descriptive statistical methods; graphs, percentages & univariate analysis were used to analyze the data.

### Results and Discussion

When consider the demographic details of study sample, it includes 58% of female & 42% of male respondents who came from France,

USA, Denmark, Netherland, England & Switzerland to travel the ancient city of Polonnaruwa. The majority of those tourists (90%) travel by bicycle inside the sacred city & they were strongly satisfied to use cycling as their transportation mode. In addition, according to their point of view, cycling is a most suitable transportation method in the sacred city of Polonnaruwa. These optimistic perceptions on cycling inside the ancient cities are affected by following identified factors which indicated by the tourists.

Factor	Value (%)
Lower Price	40
Feeling Freedom	58
Ability to Feel the Environment	62
Absence of Parking cost	63
Profitability	64
Recreation	75
Healthfulness	75
Animal Friendly	87
Lack of Dust	88
Environment Friendly	89
Lack of damages of monuments	90
Lack of Toxic Air	91
Lack of Noise Pollution	92

According to the table 1, the economic factor; cost of cycling is a less affective factor since it is indicated by 40%. It is because; the average rent of a bicycle per day is only Rs.450. Therefore, the rental cost of a bicycle

is not a considerable factor to select cycling since the maximum rent is equal to Rs.500. It can be proved by the 80% of tourist's perception; they satisfied the amount of the rent provided by the cycling service center in the Polonnaruwa ancient city. The social factors; Ability to feel the environment, feeling freedom, recreation, healthfulness & the economic factors like absence of parking cost, profitability are considerable factors that impact to select cycling as a transportation mode inside the ancient city of Polonnaruwa, because the tourist which indicated these factors are ranged from 58% to 76%. However, the most of the tourist such as over 80% are considered the environmental factors; animal friendly, lack of dust, environment friendly, lack of damages of archeological monuments, lack of toxic air & lack of noise pollution etc.

The table 2 represent the percentage values of the respondent's satisfaction on the type of the bicycle, quality of the bicycle, service provide by the cycling service sector & the road system of the sacred city etc. According to their perceptions, 45% of tourist are not satisfied the type of the bicycle they received from the service center. Specially, women complaint that their preferred types are not available in the service sector. In addition, 42% of tourists are not satisfied with the quality of the bicycle; some of bicycle are too old

&their essential items are broken or not available.

Satisfaction	Percentage Value (%)
Satisfaction on the type of the bicycle	55
Satisfaction on the quality of the bicycle	58
Satisfaction on the service provided	72
Satisfaction on the road system in the sacred city	89

However, most of them are satisfied with the service provided by the cycling service center (72%) & road system in the sacred city of Polonnaruwa (89%).

### Conclusions & Recommendations

The majority tourists travel by bicycle inside the sacred city & they were strongly satisfied to use cycling as their transportation mode. According to their point of view, cycling is a most suitable transportation method in the sacred city of Polonnaruwa. These positive perceptions on cycling as major transportation mode in the Polonnaruwa sacred city is impacted by mostly the environmental factors; animal friendly, lack of dust, environment friendly, lack of damages of archeological monuments, lack of toxic air & lack of noise pollution etc. In addition it is affected by some economic factors & social factors. When consider the satisfaction levels,

Tourist, especially women are not satisfied the type of the bicycle they received from the service center. Most of them are not satisfied with the quality of the bicycle they received. However, most of them are satisfied with the service provided by the cycling service center & road system in the sacred city of Polonnaruwa.

Based on the study findings, there are some recommendations to promote cycling as a new trend of transportation among tourists. It is more appropriate to find the type of bicycles that tourist required mostly, improve the quality of the bicycle, check carefully the condition of the bicycle daily by employing more workers.

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