

## **Impact of Built Environment on the Image of Anuradhapura Historic City, Sri Lanka**

S.M.N.S. Karunarathna

Department of Environmental Management, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.

[sandamalinimesha208@gmail.com](mailto:sandamalinimesha208@gmail.com)

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### **Introduction**

Anuradhapura Historic City, situated in Sri Lanka's North Central Province, is renowned for its historical, cultural, and religious significance. It served as the capital of ancient Sri Lanka for over a millennium, leaving behind a rich heritage of archaeological sites, monuments, and religious structures. However, the built environment of Anuradhapura has experienced substantial transformations over time due to urbanization, modernization, and tourism development. These changes have raised concerns about their potential impact on the city's image and long-term sustainability. Therefore, this research aimed to examine the relationship between the built environment and the image of Anuradhapura, providing insights into the significance of preserving and enhancing its unique characteristics. The built environment plays a vital role in shaping the image of historic cities. However, rapid urbanization and development can lead to the degradation or alteration of heritage sites and their surroundings. In the case of Anuradhapura, there is a need to understand how changes in the built environment impact the city's image and its attractiveness to tourists. This research addressed this problem by investigating the relationship between the built environment and the image of Anuradhapura. Objectives of this research were studying the current state of the built environment in Anuradhapura Historic City, examine the perception of tourists regarding the impact of the built environment on the image of Anuradhapura, identify the factors influencing the image of Anuradhapura Historic City, and provide recommendations for the preservation and enhancement of the built environment in Anuradhapura. Understanding the impact of the built environment on the image of Anuradhapura is crucial for sustainable tourism development, heritage preservation, and the overall well-being of the local community. The findings of this study can guide policymakers, urban planners, and heritage conservationists in making informed decisions to protect and enhance the city's built environment. The study was focused on Anuradhapura Historic City, located in the North Central Province of Sri Lanka. The city encompasses numerous ancient ruins, such as the Sri Maha Bodhi Tree, Ruwanwelisaya Stupa, and Jetavanaramaya, among others. These sites attract a significant number of tourists, making Anuradhapura an ideal case study for examining the impact of the built environment on the city's image.

### **Methodology**

This research was adopted a mixed-methods approach. The primary data collection methods were included surveys administered to tourists and local residents, interviews with key stakeholders involved in urban planning and heritage conservation, and on-site observations of the built environment. The collected data was undergone rigorous analysis, incorporating statistical techniques for quantitative data and thematic analysis for qualitative data. The

combination of qualitative and quantitative data was provided a comprehensive understanding of the impact of the built environment on the image of Anuradhapura.

### **Results and Discussion**

The research findings were indicated that the state of the built environment significantly influences the image of Anuradhapura. Both tourists and local residents was perceived the preservation and enhancement of heritage sites and their surrounding areas as critical factors in shaping the city's image. Neglect, unplanned development, and lack of awareness about preservation practices were identified as major challenges.

The study has also revealed specific recommendations for improving the built environment, including heritage site management, sustainable tourism practices, and community engagement. This research has underscored the importance of the built environment in shaping the image of Anuradhapura Historic City. It has emphasized the need for proactive measures to preserve and enhance heritage sites and their surroundings, ensuring sustainable development and the long-term attractiveness of the city to tourists. The study has recommended comprehensive urban planning strategies that balance development with conservation, stakeholder collaboration, public awareness campaigns, and responsible tourism practices. By implementing these recommendations, Anuradhapura can safeguard its unique historical and cultural assets while fostering a positive image and sustainable tourism growth.

### **References**

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