



**A STUDY OF IDENTIFYING THE POTENTIALS TO DEVELOP
RELIGIOUS TOURISM IN UVA PROVINCE**

(SPECIAL REFERENCE TO BADULLA DISTRICT)

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ABSTRACT

Religious tourism is an old form of tourism, where people travel individually or groups for pilgrimage, missionary or leisure purposes. It is a journey to religious and sacred sites with the purpose of spiritual motivation not only a vacation. Hence, the demand of travelling for experiencing the religious tourism related activities within the regions is gradually increased. The ability of influence travel affects in different industries including tourism market. Hence, the promoting religious tourism market as a niche tourism market within destinations may be a better option for the income generation to the tourism industry.

In this research study, researcher recognized the potentials to promote religious tourism in Uva province with special reference to Badulla district by investigating the religious tourists' expectations and behavior and destination attributes. For demand side of religious tourism ninety of potentials religious tourists were included in the sample while for the collection of data, open ended and five point likert scale questions were adopted. On the other hand ten in charge persons taken into consideration while in the collection of data, interviewing method was adopted. As this is least area of research in Sri Lankan context the visitor profile of religious tourist as well has been recognized. The numerous potentials have been identified which will be in capable of promoting religious tourism in Badulla.

According to the findings religious destinations in Badulla, has not gained enough publicity and therefore the visitors to the spots from and other states are less in number. Therefore, it is suggested that intensive publicity is to be given by the SLTDA about the religious tourism spots and occasions in Badulla. In present information regarding a few religious site and destination are available. But all these information should be organized as one official source. Travel agents and tour operators should employ as the agents of SLTDA. Tourist guides also need to be better trained especially in the field of religious tourism so that the information given is accurate and in more languages to develop religious tourism in Badulla.

Key words: *Religious tourism, Religious motives, Visitor profile, Tourists' expectation and behavior, Destination attributes*