



**ANALYZING THE POTENTIALS OF  
PROMOTING RAIL CRUISE TOURISM IN SRI  
LANKA;  
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO UP-COUNTRY RAIL  
LINE**

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## ABSTRACT

Up country rail line is a unique rail line which the journey starts at 14 feet elevation at Colombo and then ascends to the summit level of 6226 feet above sea level. The length of the railway line from Colombo to Badulla is about 180 Miles and enriches with beautiful sceneries. In terms of engineering marvel and scenery, this line - especially the UVA railway line from Peradeniya via Gampola, Ulapane, Nawalapitiya, Nanu-Oya, Ambewela, Ohiya, Idalgashinna, Haputhale, Diyathalawa, Bandarawela, Damodara and Hali-Ela to Badulla is considered to be one of the finest train journeys in the world. Therefore, this study aimed to identify the potentials to promote luxury rail cruise tourism in up country rail line in order to attract more tourist through novel tourism strategies. Specific objectives include examining the possibility of developing rail cruise tourism in Sri Lanka and what are the main challenges of implementing rail cruise tourism in Sri Lanka. For this mixed-method research, Key Informant Interviews were conducted with the officer at Sri Lanka Railway officers and Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority to collect qualitative information while a survey with 100 tourists was conducted to collect quantitative information essential for the study. The respondent was selected based on Convenient Sampling and a structured questionnaire were used to collect the data. Mainly, descriptive statistics and thematic analysis were used to accomplish the objectives of the study. The result of the study revealed that Sri Lanka has potentials to promote rail cruise tourism and tourists had a positive perception about rail cruise tourism in Sri Lanka. However, results also reveal that there is a number of barriers related to infrastructure, organizational and technological barriers in relation to promoting rail cruise tourism in Sri Lanka. In conclusion, the study emphasizes the possibility of promoting rail cruise tourism in Sri Lanka and hence government intervention to resolve the barriers related to rail cruise tourism is highly recommended.

**Keywords:** *Rail-cruise tourism, Niche tourism, Sri Lankan railway, Sri Lanka Tourism*