

## **Designing of Eco-Tour Plans along the Up Country Rail-Track**

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Most of the foreign tourists arrive in Sri Lanka mainly from western countries. Their average stay in the island is around two weeks due to their busy schedules and with limited spending capacities. Therefore, majority of them expects to spend their stay in most productive manner by covering many experiences during their stay here. However, due to poor infrastructure facilities and lack of information and awareness about the tourist attractions majority of them manage to cover only few areas and their stay is mostly unproductive in that sense. Therefore, this research aims at minimizing unproductive time during their stay in the Island and to come up with more productive and attractive tour plans thereby to increase the number of tourist attractions they can cover within one trip. As a case study Uva region was selected due to its diversity of tourist attractions. Furthermore, as a prime mode of transportation, railways were selected since there are many attractions scattered around up-country rail track in this region and this part of railway track is also famous among the foreign travelers due to the scenery and bio diversity etc. Mainly travelling process has been divided into different segments and possible delays have been identified. Tour plans are arranged minimizing the delays to match with local transport services time tables so that experiences and attractions can be maximized. This research was done in several phases. In the first phase, famous tourist's attractions were identified and closest railway stations to these sites were also identified. In the second phase, best possible tour planning was done by considering the accessibility from the respective railway stations and railway time tables. The prime objective was to introduce tour plans which effectively utilize time. In the third phase, drawbacks of the existing system were identified and possible suggestions are made in the third phase. In the fourth phase, an interactive tour planner with Decision Supporting System is designed and developed. Maps of this nature are very rare in local context. Finally based on the studies it can be seen that many attractions can be covered within limited time facilitating a productive holiday plan.

Key words: Tour planning, Eco-tourism, Decision Support systems